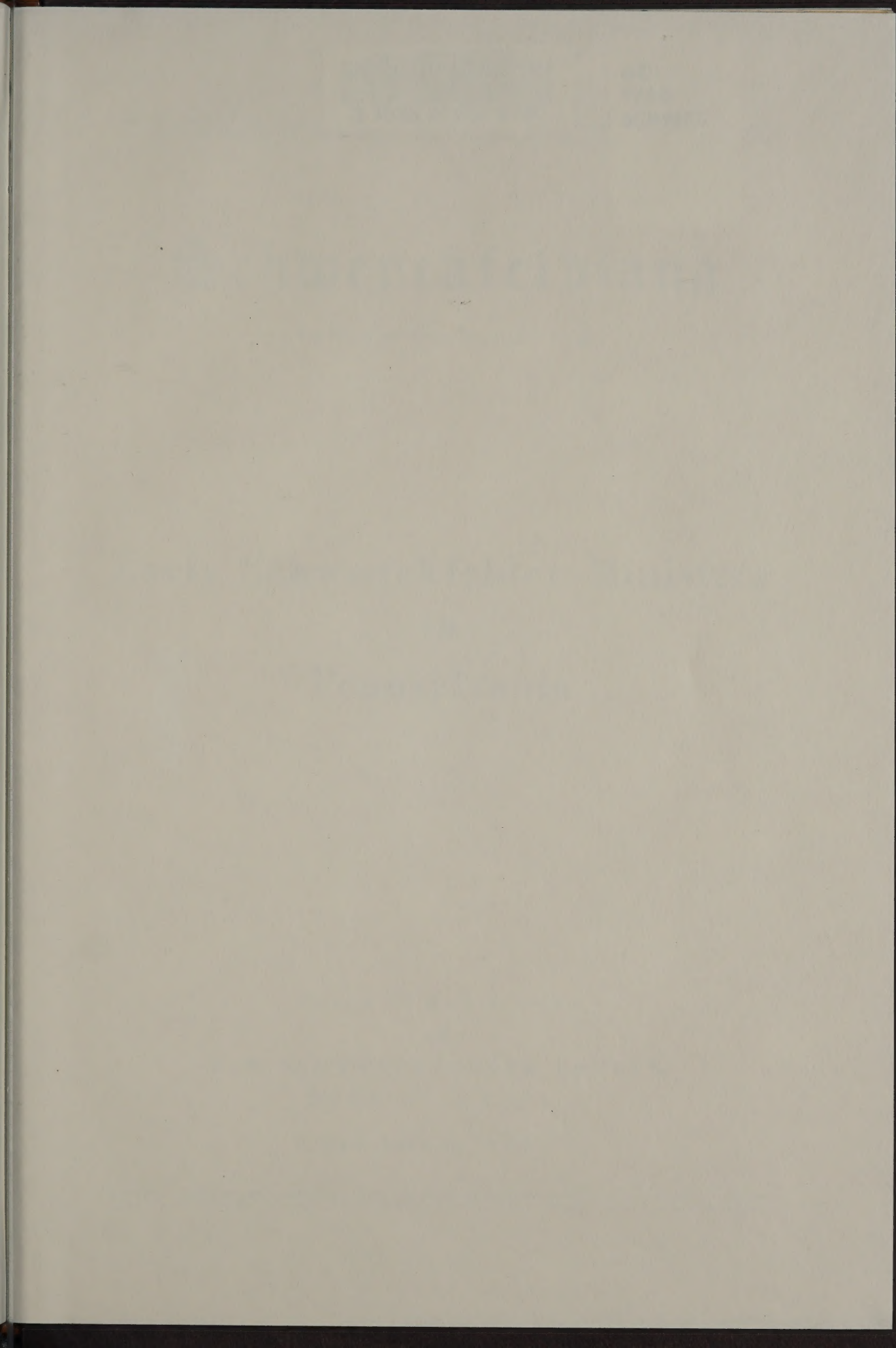
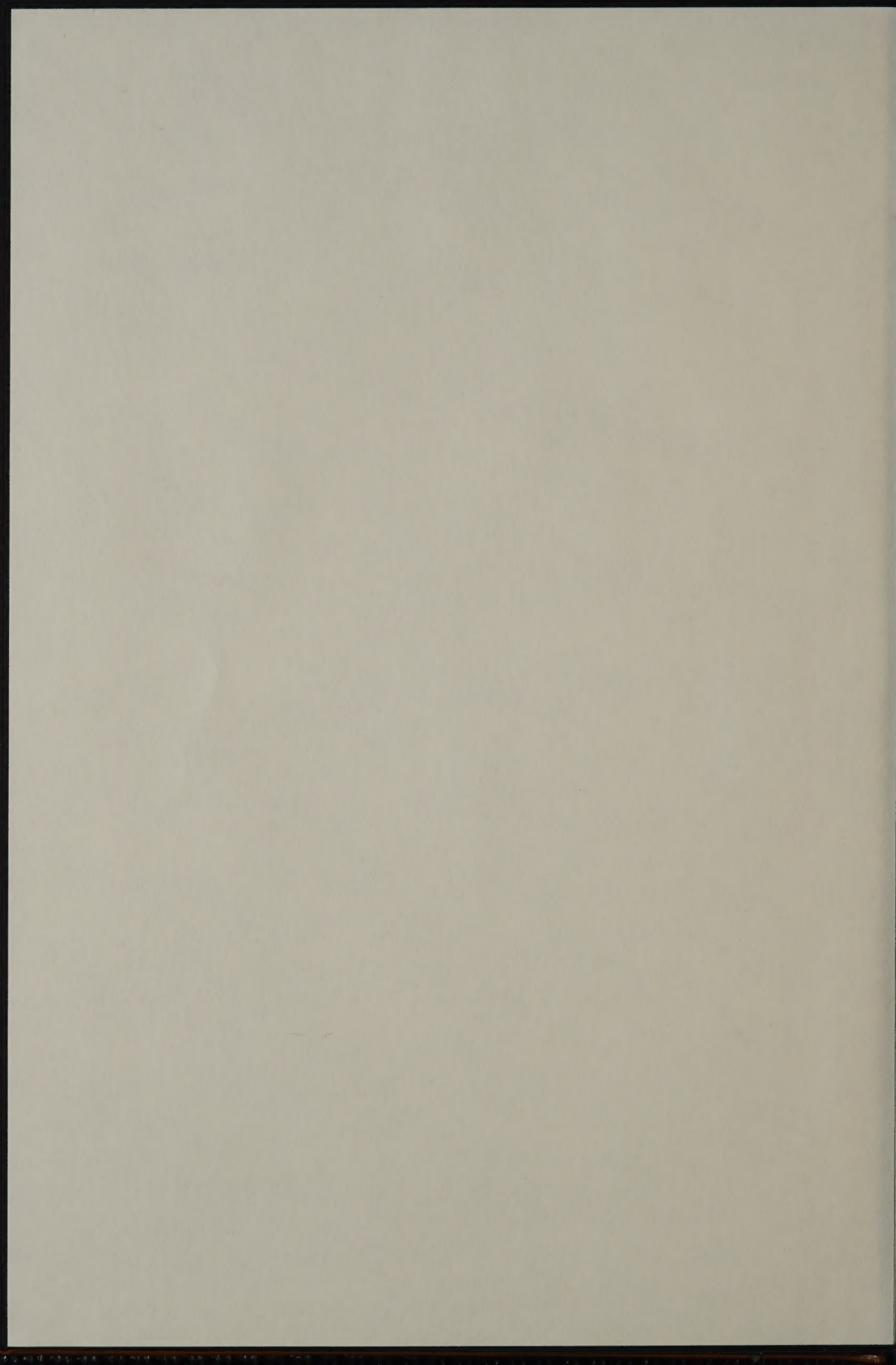






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Schwenckfeldiana

Volume I—Number 2

Early Schwenckfelder Ministers in Pennsylvania

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PREFACE

In the first issue of the SCHWENCKFELDIANA, 1940, the hope was expressed that the publication would appeal to all members of the Schwenckfelder Church and to all others who are in any way interested in an exceedingly rich fund of fine literary, historical and theological masterpieces to such an extent, at least, that it would seem worth while to attempt the publication of another issue. It is believed that this hope has been fulfilled; hence Number 2 of the SCHWENCKFELDIANA has been issued with the fond expectation that it will be equally as well received.

This number, like the former one, is in a way also a memorial issue, in honor of George Weiss (1687-1740), the first Schwenckfelder minister in America and his immediate successors in the ministry. They were all refugees, immigrants of 1734, stalwart, God-fearing men of strong convictions; it took such characters those days to get a start in the American wilderness, to establish a church and to shepherd a little flock.

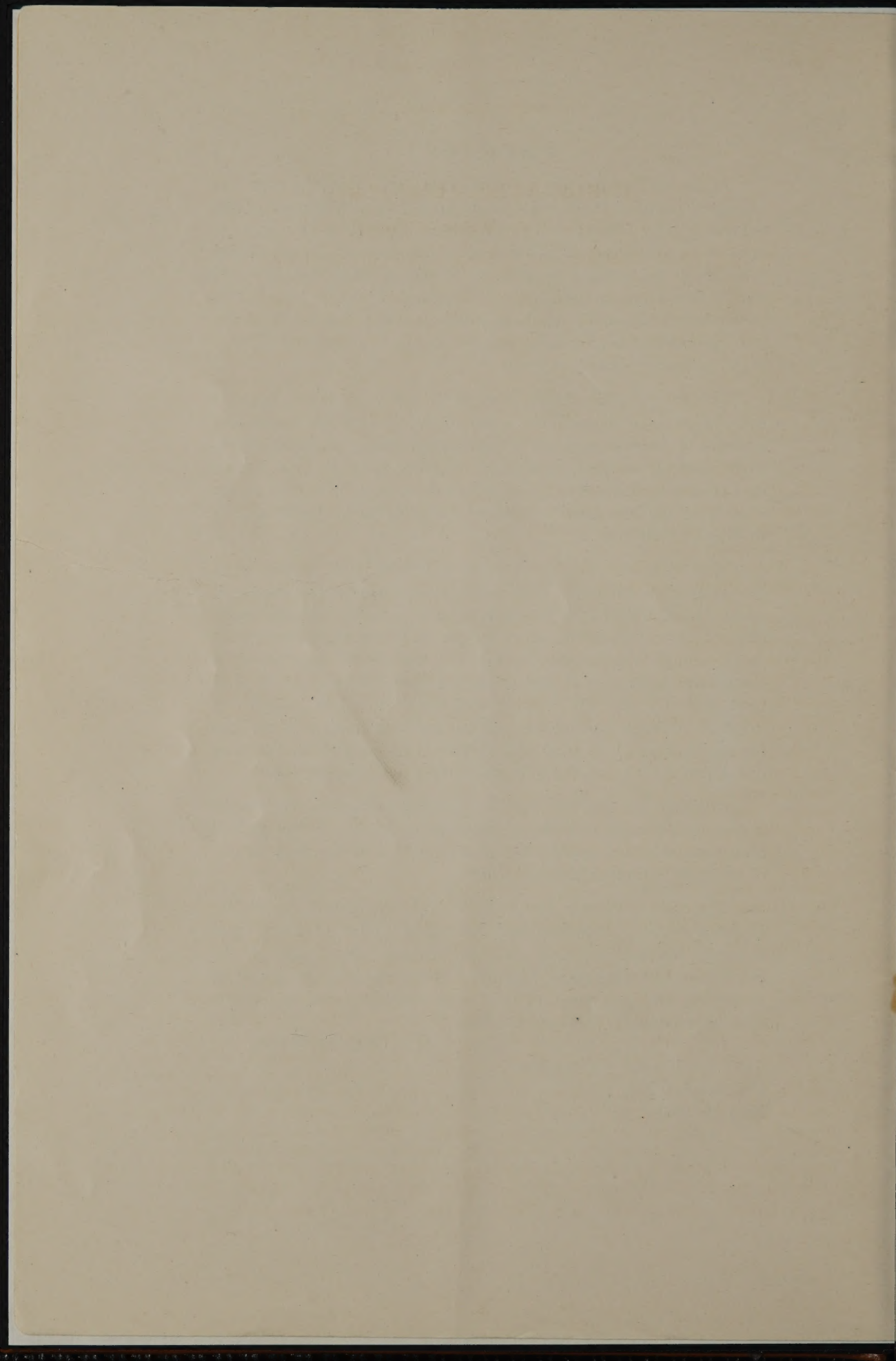
The work done on these men in this issue is all pioneer work based on original sources. With possibly one exception, no complete, adequate account of them was ever attempted heretofore, and probably mainly so because much of the material was, until very recent years, almost wholly inaccessible. All this source material is in manuscript form, and is written in fine German script, some of it most minutely so. To decipher this material and to translate it involved a large amount of tedious and painstaking labor. As for the richness of the fund of literature, it becomes richer the more one delves into it. So far only the surface has been scratched.

Although the first issue of the SCHWENCKFELDIANA was wholly a memorial number in honor of Christopher Schultz, it was deemed only honorable and appropriate to include him in this issue as one of the early Schwenckfelder ministers.

The editor wishes to thank the several contributors, and Selina Gerhard Schultz, Associate and Managing Editor of the *Corpus Schwenckfeldianorum*, and Ada L. Kriebel, Secretary of the Schwenckfelder Historical Library, Pennsburg, Pa., for giving so graciously and generously of their time and effort, and any others who helped to make this issue possible.

E. S. GERHARD, *Editor*.

414 Church Lane, Germantown,
Philadelphia, Pa.,
May 15, 1941



GEORGE WEISS (1687-1740)

First Schwenckfelder Minister in Pennsylvania

By LESTER K. KRIEBEL and SELINA GERHARD SCHULTZ

George Weiss, a devout and pious Schwenckfelder leader, prominent hymn-writer and instructor of youth, holds the unique honor of being the first Schwenckfelder minister in America. His life reveals an interesting but strenuous pioneer career in the Schwenckfelder movement in Silesia, Saxony, and America.

Birth and Parentage

Born in Harpersdorf, lower Silesia, Germany, in 1687, he came from a family, plain and poor, but prominent in Schwenckfelder affairs. His father, Caspar Weiss, who was born in 1643 at Deutmannsdorf, Principality of Jauer, Silesia, was a linen weaver by trade. His mother, Anna Anders, was the daughter of George Anders, Sr., of Harpersdorf. His parents, although educated and well read, lived a life of poverty. They were blessed with three children, the youngest son, Caspar, died September 8, 1713, at Harpersdorf in his 20th year; the only daughter, Maria, was buried November 24, 1713, at 23 years of age; the oldest son, George, the subject of our consideration, was the only child from this family of three children who survived. In 1715 he married Anna Meschter of Langneundorf, Silesia. They had one son, Abraham, who died in his second year. George learned his father's trade of linen weaving, earning a livelihood for his family by ceaseless weaving.

His Father

The father, Caspar Weiss, was intelligent and influential in the Schwenckfelder community; he was exceptionally well read, and had a fine library on religious, philosophical and educational subjects. He was an ardent follower and defender of the Schwenckfelder faith. From his rich library he was very familiar with the various creeds which he had studied. Moreover, he was blessed with the gift of speech and able to express himself clearly and with great

force whenever the occasion demanded. Perhaps because of hard physical labor his hand was unsteady, making him a poor writer. In fact, he could not write at all; he printed all his letters. Because of this handicap he was forced to express himself through speech, and, consequently, became very adept in this method. In his day he was one of the best informed men among the Schwenckfelders on doctrine, theology, and Scripture. This would account for the fact that Caspar Weiss was chosen to defend and justify the faith before the notorious Pastor Johann Samuel Neander in Harpersdorf. For six hours the Pastor kept the aged man standing as he made his confession and defended the faith of the Schwenckfelders. He was gifted in hymn-writing and was encouraged to compile a Schwenckfelder hymnal to accord with the gospel lessons so that these hymns might be used in similar order with the lessons. He not only had the required intelligence and information, but also was willing to serve his people in practical doctrine and confession.

His Education

This religious and educational influence had a very direct bearing on the son, George Weiss. He made ample use of his father's library, and, consequently, became well read and informed in doctrine and Christian theology, as well as in the writings of Schwenckfeld. In his youth he read the writings of Schwenckfeld and various confessions of faith, and even attempted his Scriptural studies in other languages than German. Thus, a little later on, in his secular education, he became proficient in the ancient languages of Hebrew, Greek and Latin, and used them to advantage in his Scriptural exegeses and in giving language instruction as the occasion demanded. Because of extreme poverty and religious piety, the youth was taught to keep busy and occupied at all times. Before he had

reached the age of 13, he had copied Michael Hiller's *Postil* (a series of sermons for the church year). He had a natural gift for the writing of poetry, but never received any training in this art. This he lamented frequently during his extensive work in writing and compiling hymns. He rendered material assistance in aiding his father to transcribe and compile the Schwenckfelder hymnal of 1709, consisting of 874 hymns. This work was a splendid discipline, not only in acquainting him with the technique of writing and arranging hymns, but also in Christian doctrine contained in the hymns. This knowledge of the Schwenckfeldian doctrine fitted him for taking the lead in preparing Confessions or Statements of Faith for the defense of the Schwenckfelders just preceding and during the trying period of the Jesuit Mission which arrived in 1719 in his native Silesia.

Flight to Saxony

Following the unsuccessful attempt to win toleration from Vienna, beginning May 5, 1721, the Schwenckfelder families decided to flee from Silesia during the period February to May, 1726, the first flight occurring on January 29th, from Harpersdorf, and the last on May 5th of the same year. From the records of Oswald Kadelbach, "Ausführliche Geschichte Kaspar V. Schwenkfelds und der Schwenckfelder in Schlesien, der Ober-Lausitz und Amerika," we find that George Weiss, "weaver," and his wife, fled from Harpersdorf to Herrnhut on May 5, 1726.

Appointed Religious Leader

The Schwenckfelder exiles who fled to Saxony finally settled in Berthelsdorf. Expecting to remain here permanently, many of them built homes. George Weiss settled down to a quiet life of spinning and teaching. As we noted, while he was still living in Silesia he was probably the best informed Schwenckfelder on Scripture and Schwenckfeld doctrine. He now completed the enlarged hymnal mentioned previously. He noticed the lack of knowledge of the truth as he and others were wont to speak of Schwenckfeldian doctrine, and the tendency to dis-

integration which had set in among the group. He called attention thereto, sympathetically, also conducted prayer-meetings on his own initiative, hoping to better these conditions. He read to those assembled, and explained hymns, sentence by sentence; hymns were also sung by the gathering, and the meeting closed by prayer. It was during this period that interested youth like Christopher Schultz came to Weiss for language instruction. Here also Weiss of his own volition established a very helpful correspondence with various members of the Schwenckfelder group, in which he took opportunity to expound and elucidate various Scriptural passages and discuss difficult doctrinal points which occupied the minds of the people. Weiss was called upon by the parents to instruct the young through the catechetical method. The children came to him several times a week. This was the beginning of his 1600 catechetical questions.

Migration to the New World

Finally, when the Catholic Church reached out its hand to compel the Schwenckfelders in Saxony to return to Silesia, an edict was issued from Bautzen on April 4, 1733, stating that they could no longer be protected in Berthelsdorf under the patronage of Count Zinzendorf. This caused no little consternation among them and resulted in the decision to migrate to the New World.

On April 13, 1734, one week before the Schwenckfelder exiles left Berthelsdorf for America, a great conference was called at which George Weiss read a rigorous paper which he had prepared on the past and present condition of the Schwenckfelders, and in which he set forth rules and suggestions for the conduct of their life after reaching their new home in Pennsylvania. Liberty and truth were two principles which lay very close to the heart of George Weiss. He spoke of these to some trusted friends, and of the duty he felt. Thereupon they concluded that he was capable of doing the best for truth under the circumstances, and hence appointed him as leader.

The migration from Berthelsdorf began on Tuesday, April 20, 1734. The group was advised to travel in small

companies to Pirna where they embarked on the Elbe River, passing through Dresden, Madgeburg, and Hamburg, and arriving in Altona, May 17th, 6 a. m. After a delay of eleven days there, they continued to Amsterdam and Haarlem, and finally sailed on the ship, *St. Andrew*, from Rotterdam, June 28, 1734, arriving at the Port of Philadelphia, September 22, 1734 (Old Style Calendar—September 11th).

His Ministry on Board Ship

During the entire period of the journey, amid rejoicing and suffering, sickness and death, George Weiss ministered whenever possible, or as opportunity afforded, to the spiritual needs of the little flock who had appointed him as their spiritual leader. He looked forward hopefully to good results when they would be settled in America. Would that records had been preserved describing the instruction and devotional services conducted on board the ship *St. Andrew* and the exhortations given by Weiss on this adventurous journey, preparing the people for their new home in a land of liberty.

Tragedy, trial and hardship seem to have been inseparable companions to our solemn and pious leader. On the very day that the thankful group landed at Philadelphia, September 22nd, his wife, Anna Meschter Weiss, entered eternal rest and was buried on September 23rd in Pilgrim Cemetery, Philadelphia. George Weiss was now bereft of all of his family, and left alone in the New World to expend his energies and thought on the little flock of Schwenckfelders.

Memorial Day

The day after the burial of his wife he led those of the little group who were not ill probably to a vacant wooded lot in the less populated district on High Street (Market Street) near Fifth Street, in Philadelphia, there to hold a service of gratitude and thanksgiving to Almighty God for His mercy and safe deliverance. It was the idea and the privilege of George Weiss to institute this service which has been observed annually to the present day.

Ministry in Pennsylvania

The six brief years of life remaining to this diligent worker, were years of bitter grief, dejection and discouragement. As the Schwenckfelders moved out of Philadelphia into Germantown and Flourtown, and thence in 1735 farther up into the country to Towamencin, Skippack, Goshenhoppen, Falekner Swamp, Macungie and Oley, they were of necessity occupied in clearing the land, establishing homes and securing a living. Consequently, the religious life, if not entirely neglected, was held in abeyance because of the economic struggle. Family groups were widely scattered, unorganized and subject to the influence of non-Schwenckfelder forces, eager to enlist them into groups of other faiths. No man was more keenly aware of the perilous circumstances facing these people in America than was George Weiss, and it was this fact that preyed upon his life and conscience to his dying day. As early as March, 1735, we find him visiting various families which had settled in the districts beyond Philadelphia.

By the end of 1735 he had located on a farm along the Skippack Creek in Lower Salford Township near the present site of the Lower Salford Schwenckfelder Meeting House. From this place as his headquarters he traveled on horseback to Germantown, Frederick (Falekner Swamp), Goshenhoppen and Macungie, visiting various families throughout the summer and staying from one to several weeks at a place, to give catechetical instruction to the children and to exhort the parents to a more earnest religious life, at the same time conducting also a voluminous correspondence with individual members of his flock. It was not possible to institute regular, public, religious services at this early date because his flock was widely scattered. Hence, wherever he went, it was his custom to hold informal devotional services. On November 9, 1735, nine Schwenckfelder house-fathers met and elected George Weiss as minister, and Balthasar Hoffmann and David Seipt as Deacons (Aeltesten). Following the formal election he resumed his duties as spiritual leader and adviser and instruc-

tor of the young with renewed zeal and energy. At the same time he tried to earn his living by weaving, and lived a very busy and crowded life in spite of poor health.

Weiss and Christopher Wiegner

By 1736 a new type of trouble beset Weiss. Christopher Wiegner of Towamencin had not only been reading non-Schwenckfelder books, but also had entertained at his home the Moravians, Augustus Gottlieb Spangenberg, George Whitefield, Peter Böhler, and others, who were interested in persuading the Schwenckfelders to join the Moravian group. Wiegner with his various guests attended Schwenckfelder religious services conducted in private homes and at times caused a disturbance in these devotional meetings. On several occasions it was necessary for Weiss to resist these men and ask them to refrain from attending the services. Moreover, many of the Schwenckfelder families had not cooperated with Weiss in defending their group and the religious services from disrupting influences. In addition he was stricken with serious illness on several occasions so that he became very depressed in spirit and entertained the thought of relinquishing entirely his public services. However, the Schwenckfelders renewed their contract with him in 1737, which fact encouraged him somewhat to continue his services for the group. Because of physical limitations he found it necessary to limit his devotional services to a fixed place or home in each community, and thus the various families in that community would attend there. As a result, many stayed away and appeared to be lukewarm and indifferent. In September, 1738, he wrote: "The jealous spirits, the ignoble thoughts, the derogatory remarks, the secret envy and the idiosyncrasies both towards me as well as towards each other prove quite plainly that nothing is wanting more in you than the properties of a church, or organized body of believers."

Last Services and Death

The last catechetical instruction and examination conducted by George Weiss occurred in Goshenhoppen on the evening of March 3, 1740. Instead of ex-

plaining several verses of Matthew 20, he endeavored to establish a foundation in the knowledge of the Holy Trinity as recorded in the Confession. He maintained that in this pursuit the Christian found a genuine delight and joy and therein rested his entire salvation. General ignorance and indifference prevented him from taking up this subject at an earlier time. In his lament of this general indolence concerning spiritual matters he dwelt with some detail on Matthew 16:3, saying he was convinced that this saying of Christ concerned us in the present day, when the Lord said: "O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but ye cannot discern the signs of the times." He warned his pupils against indifference and laxity, and urged them to study in humility and with diligence. He concluded by stating that one could discern the face of heaven only by knowing the heavenly Son, Christ.

Following this exhortation he examined the pupils on the doctrinal points of Eternity, Omnipotence, and on the Unchangeableness of God. He stressed the fact that Christ had neither beginning nor end, and rescued us as children of grace, heirs of the divine estate.

During the night he was overcome with great fatigue and weariness of body. In the morning he did not rise as early as was his usual custom, and shortly after he rose, he was compelled to lie down again, until it was time for the people to assemble for worship service. Here he conducted and concluded his last religious service.

His last text from which he spoke was Psalm 78:19 "Yea, they spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?" He warned against the danger of trusting in God merely for physical sustenance, as do the ungodly. He urged a continual care for things eternal. Then he supplemented his exhortation by commenting on Matthew 6:33 "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Weiss showed great concern because of man's unbelief and his failure to entrust the salvation of his soul to God.

Following his gripping exhortation he announced two hymns which were sung by the congregation: "Christus der wahre

Gottes Sohn" and "Als Christus hie auf Erden war."

His concluding talk consisted of a brief review of the Gospel Lesson for the previous Sunday, *i. e.*, Matthew 15. He pictured the plight of the stricken daughter, and the great humility of the mother, the Canaanitish woman. His throat was weak and hoarse at the end; he had spoken with great conviction, using well chosen words, emphasized with great sighing and many tears. He found it difficult to end the service. With tears and exhortation he prayed that he and others might not fail to recognize Christ in His three-fold ministry. Several times he repeated Peter's prayer, "Lord Jesus, save me, save me, or I will soon perish."

He urged his hearers to remain steadfast in the faith. Admitting that he was rapidly failing physically, he thought it might be the last time he would be with them. Thus it was his wish to testify to them—"One may choose what he will, but there is no other way unto salvation, than to do like the Canaanitish woman—turn unto the Lord, and without ceasing, petition Him with cries, sighing and prayers."

Upon reaching home he was confined to his bed and died a week later, March 11, 1740, on his farm at Skippack, at 53 years of age.

Like a giant, tenacious oak in the forest, Weiss towered above his flock during these trying days of readjustment and organization. He resisted such influences as tended to weaken and disrupt the spiritual life of his people. In his simplicity and poverty he became a striking example of the devout Christian life that he would have his own people live. In his public services he was very sincere, pleading with the young and their elders with great effect and power, and frequently with many tears. In spirit and in expression he reflected the character and soul of St. Augustine. One cannot help but feel that here was a direct disciple of that great Church Father. As one reads the sermons and exhortations of Weiss, one is reminded of a similar experience and expression thereof in the confession of St. Augustine. With penitence and tears, both dwelt on the unfathomable mercy of God and labored to make His Kingdom secure.

Writer, Compiler and Interpreter of Hymns*

The first Schwenckfelder hymn-book printed in America was not an isolated production but a member of a series of hymn-books, of which the earlier numbers remained in manuscript. The collection of hymns which stands at the head of this series bears the date of 1709. It was made by Caspar Weiss (father of George Weiss), a devout Schwenckfelder, who lived in the town of Harpersdorf, Principality of Liegnitz, Silesia. Our knowledge of this early Schwenckfelder hymn-collator must, unfortunately, remain limited. The year of his birth is not known.¹ His death occurred in Harpersdorf in 1712, a few years before the period of strenuous though fruitless effort of the Jesuit mission in Silesia to stamp out the Schwenckfelders as a sect. For the following conclusions, however, we have ample documentary testimony: First, that Caspar Weiss was an ardent devotee of the faith of the great reformer for whom he was named; and, second, that by reason of his familiarity with the various creeds represented in Protestantism at the opening of the Eighteenth Century, he was admirably qualified for the work of compiling the hymn-collection which, in a direct line of development, became the original ancestor of the first printed hymn-book of the Schwenckfelders in America, three generations later. He possessed the additional qualifications of being talented musically, and of having a wide familiarity with the church hymn. He knew the Latin hymns of St. Augustine, St. Ambrosius, St. Hieronymus, and others of the church fathers; the hymns of Luther, the earliest German hymn-books of the Bohemian Brethren or Moravians (called by Weiss the Picards), the hymns of the Schwenckfelder hymn-writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the well-known "Nürnbergisches Gesang-Buch" of 1690.

The following brief account of Caspar Weiss is taken from the "Vorrede und Bericht" prefacing the manuscript volume of the year 1758:

* Adapted from Allen Anders Seipt, "Schwenckfelder Hymnology," 1909, pp. 61-82.

¹ Discovered since, it was 1643.

"The above mentioned Caspar Weiss was born at Deutmansdorf, Principality of Jauer, Silesia, of very plain and poor parents. He was a linen weaver by trade, and plighted his troth to Anna Anders, daughter of George Anders, the elder, of Harpersdorf, Principality of Liegnitz, and lived in Harpersdorf in a modest little home. And thus he passed his entire life in poverty. God gave him two sons and a daughter. The second son, however, and the daughter died young. The elder son, George by name, it was, who later revised and enlarged this hymn-book."

In testimony of the fact that Weiss was recognized as a man of intelligence and influence, and that he bore his part in the persecution, to which in the closing years of his life the Schwenckfelders of Liegnitz in particular were subjected, we cite a brief excerpt from the so-called "Erläuterung" of the Schwenckfelders. Tottering with age, the venerable Weiss was compelled to stand for six long hours before the notorious Herr Pastor Johann Samuel Neander, in the latter's study, to give an account of his faith. The passage follows:

"For six full hours, the afore-mentioned Neander kept said Caspar Weiss standing before him in his study without permitting him to sit down, in order to question him concerning his faith. This standing the aged man was scarcely able to endure, though he was quite willing and prepared to make his confession. A rational person will draw his own inference of the disposition indicated hereby on the part of the said Pastor."

For the information we possess concerning the origin of the hymn-collection of Caspar Weiss, we are indebted to the pen of Balthasar Hoffmann. The latter also recorded, in an historical manuscript still extant, an account of the sources of the collection, as well as a statement of the method pursued by Weiss in arranging and editing the individual hymns. We quote Hoffmann in full, inasmuch as he both was an intimate of the Weiss family and, as we have already noted, figured prominently in the activity which this monograph purposes to set forth:

"And it may therefore be made known that Caspar Weiss, his father, began the

work. And he was encouraged to do it by a plain, old Schwenckfelder of his time, whose name was Martin Mentzel (old Melchior Mentzel's father). At one time he said to Caspar Weiss: 'You, of course, could rearrange our hymn-book (referring to the large, printed hymn-book, which we still have), in such a way that the hymns would accord with the Gospel Lessons and could be sung to some extent in order. You would have the required intelligence and information.' And since Caspar was ready to serve his people, and had occasion to do something for practice in Christian doctrine and in confession, he considered the matter. Accordingly, he had the Psalm-hymns copied, together with many other hymns which he collected, and the so-called 'Roman hymns.' At that very time, the hymns of Martin John came to light, being shortly after his death. In addition, George Weiss, his son (at the request of his father) composed hymns on the Gospel Lessons. And thus did Caspar Weiss compile a hymn book, in accordance with the church year (the collection which I [Balthasar Hoffmann] copied, 1709, and which still exists), and committed it, so to say, to the care of his children and in the preface dedicated it to them, desiring them to regard it as a bequest."

The following section of the original preface to the hymn collection of 1709 was written by George Weiss, as a preface to his hymns, or metrical versions, of the Gospel Lessons:

"Let no one think that the hymns and songs on the Gospel Lessons, contained in this tract, are issued for the sake of praise or honor. But little would be attained thereby, and the seeking after honor and praise especially in such matters, is among Christians a pharisaical act. Nor are they issued to show off elegance and highly charming poetical style. These are not to be found herein, but are ceded to educated poets. They have come forth out of simplicity, and for that reason will be best understood by simplicity. They are issued for no other purpose than to bring more satisfactorily to the mind of the plain man the words and deeds of Christ, because the evangelists went to so much trouble to testify of, and to narrate the same, in

order to assure the Christians in that which is to be thought and believed about Christ, as Luke, Chapter I testifies to Theophilus. Hence I think there is no more beneficial study than to reflect on the words and deeds of Christ, for they by far excel the teachings and deeds of others, who also were impelled by the Holiest. In the words and deeds of Christ are contained and included the foremost teachings, admonitions, consolations and warnings, which should be reflected on, considered and practiced by all Christians very diligently. For this reason, and for no other, these hymns on the Gospel Lessons are issued, to teach us in simplicity, and to make better known, the teachings, admonitions, consolations and warnings of Christ. But this cannot be done without the working and help of the Holy Spirit. May He by His grace grant and give that we sing, meditate and study to the praise of God and to our edification. If they should come into the hands of anyone who regarded them of no value and unnecessary, I beg him to leave them to those who know how to use them. If they come into possession of one who recognizes their value, let him thank God for them, because thanks are due to God for all His gifts, whether physical or spiritual; and let him be unconcerned about the author, for he issued them only for himself and his own who sincerely desired it. May God grant us His Spirit, the Spirit of grace and reverence for the sake of His Son, Jesus Christ, that we may sing, reflect on, and use them to His praise and honor, and to the salvation of our souls. Amen."

With respect to the classification of the individual hymns, two distinguishing features serve to characterize the collection of Caspar Weiss. First: The hymns are arranged, not according to theme or rubric, but in agreement with the course of the ecclesiastical year—a group of hymns being arranged for each Sunday and holy day in the calendar year, beginning with the first Sunday of Advent. Moreover, a close study of the classification reveals the fact that the compiler intended that each hymn should, as far as possible, be peculiarly appropriate to the particular day to which it was assigned. Secondly, the hymns thus set apart for each Sunday and holy day are

further arranged into two groups: one group being designed for use in the morning worship, and the other in connection with afternoon or evening devotions. It may also be observed, in conclusion, that the completed compilation was designed primarily for the use of the author's own family. This fact is noted by Balthasar Hoffmann in his account of the collection, quoted above, and is also plainly stated on the title-page of the original collection itself.

Like his father, George Weiss was admirably fitted for the work of a hymnodist. He had a natural bent for the writing of poetry, although unfortunately he never received training in the poetic art—a fact which he himself lamented frequently, both in his efforts as a compiler of hymns, as well as when acting in the role of a hymn writer. He had rendered his father much assistance in transcribing and compiling the hymns of the collection of 1709. He was versed in three of the ancient languages—Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. Being of pious parentage, he was early indoctrinated with Biblical principles, as well as grounded in the creed and tenets of Caspar von Schwenckfeld. Indeed, it may safely be said that there has never been a more intensely spiritual Schwenckfelder than George Weiss.

The relation which George Weiss sustains to the hymnody of the Schwenckfelders is three-fold: First, as a writer of hymns, second, as a reviser of hymns, and, third, as a transcriber and compiler. Of his activity as a hymn writer, barely an outline can be given here; to wit, (1) "Gesänge über die Evangelia" (1709)—"metrical versions of the Gospel Lessons" for the entire ecclesiastical year; (2) "Meditationes" (ca. 1724-30), each proper name treated is given in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and German; then follow the references containing the Biblical account of the character under consideration; then the "Meditatio" in the form of a hymn, being several series of hymns based on the names of numerous Bible characters—the patriarchs, the prophets, the genealogy of Christ as given in Matthew, the genealogy of Christ as recorded by Luke, and the apostles—each group becomes the basis of a series of hymns; and (3) his revision

of the hymns of Daniel Sudermann. This revision consisted of a restrophicising of a number of the Sudermann hymns, and the addition to the majority of the hymns of one or more strophes intended as a prayer (Seufzer).

Of the hymnological studies of George Weiss—studies that were both extensive and productive of valuable information—our space forbids us to speak. Neither does this phase of his activity properly belong to the scope of the present work. It is in his role as the promoter of the work begun by Caspar Weiss, his father, that he demands consideration here. It was about the year 1726 when George Weiss took up the task of rearranging and enlarging the hymn collection of 1709. The addition which was at this time made to the original collection was composed chiefly of three series of hymns, each complete in itself and written by as many authors. The series in question were: (1) The hymns of Daniel Sudermann which Weiss had revised—a series of hymns interpreting the Song of Solomon; (2) the "Epistel-lieder" so-called, by Balthasar Hoffmann—being a series of metrical versions of the "Epistle Lessons," complete for the church year; (3) the "Meditationes," which we have already characterized. The other hymns added by George Weiss to the first collection constitute a miscellany representing various Moravian and Lutheran hymn writers, as well as the early church fathers. The complete list of the hymns of this miscellany, which had been prepared for this chapter, it has been necessary to omit.

With respect to the plan of arrangement, it should be noted that the compilation made by George Weiss differs from that of 1709 in two important features: First, the hymns selected for each Sunday and holy day are further arranged into four groups having the titles "Frühe," "Vor-Mittage," "Nach-Mittage," and "Kinder-Lehr," the second and third of these groups corresponding to the two-fold division of the collection of Caspar Weiss; second, the individual hymns are classified on the basis of metrical structure—as far as was practicable, hymns with the same type of verse and the same or a similar strophic structure, having been grouped together.

Moreover, verse for verse, the syllables were carefully counted in order to exclude entirely the hiatus and to leave not a hymn with an imperfect line. As hinted above, the arrangement of the hymn-groups by Sundays and holy days—one characteristic, as we have seen, of the original compilation—was retained by the second compiler.

In the earliest manuscript of this collection known to exist there are, unfortunately, missing from the preface those pages which contained the compiler's own account of the sources with which he was operating when enlarging the original collection. However, the loss is luckily repaired in part by the following account of the second compilation, extant in the already cited surviving manuscript of Balthasar Hoffmann. The passage contains, also, Hoffmann's statement of the re-arrangement which the first collection underwent in the hands of George Weiss, the second compiler. We quote Hoffmann in full:

"Long afterwards and after the death of Caspar Weiss, and especially at the time of the Mission, George Weiss wrote his 'Meditationes' on the names of the generations in Matthew and Luke, and the other names. Not until after the first emigration, in Saxony, were they completed. Thereafter in Saxony, privately, and for his own use and that of his household, because he led a quiet life and sought to make good use of Sundays and holy days, and also for the training, he enlarged the first collection, making a four-fold division of the hymns for each Sunday, as it still exists. At that time the hymns on the Epistle Lessons also were added; and this augmentation received further mention in the preface. He also wrote at this time the prayer strophes intended as addenda to the hymns of Daniel Sudermann. But with regard to the arrangement of this collection, it should be noted that he had no thought that it would be imitated (as has been the case), although it was transcribed in his life-time, and I too have transcribed it; but he prepared it for his own private use. And for the divisions "Vor-Mittage" and "Nach-Mittage" he chose the more familiar, for the other two divisions, however, the less familiar hymns. And furthermore he ar-

ranged it in such a way that, as far as might be practicable, there would be a uniform meter for the singing of the hymns. Accordingly, he counted the syllables, and placed one hymn here and another there, with the result that the hymns in the matter of theme have no sequence. For I well know, that if he had known that it was destined to be a permanent work, he would have arranged it differently. Indeed, he said to me at one time: 'If I were to arrange it now, it might be that a number of the hymns would not be included.' This I submit, not to censure or to condemn the work of George Weiss, but for the sake of exact knowledge."

Summarizing, now, with respect to constituency and size, the collection of George Weiss was composed of: (1) The entire collection of 1709, numbering 874 hymns; (2) the Sudermann hymns as revised by Weiss, 230 in number; (3) the "Epistel-lieder," by Hoffmann, 106 hymns; (4) the "Meditationes" by the compiler himself, 178 hymns, and (5) 171 hymns of a miscellaneous character. Total, 1,559 hymns. Such was the Schwenckfelder hymn collection as it came from the hands of George Weiss. It was completed on the eve of the departure of the Schwenckfelders from Saxony. In September of the year 1734, with its author it reached the genial land of Penn, and for upwards of thirty years it served as the hymnary of the sect, furnishing the hymns sung at their gatherings for religious worship, at the meetings of their youth for "Kinderlehr," and at the annual observance of "Gedaechtnisstag."

Memorial Day Hymns by Weiss

Ein hertzliches Klag-Lied zu Christo
an einem Gedächtnis-Tage betrachtet
(28 stanzas)

Darinnen vorgestellt wird die uner-
grundliche Gnad
und wolthat Gottes, unsz erzeiget in
Lehr und
Führung, und wie so wenig solches
erkannt wird,
also dasz es möge zur Besserung und
Untergebung
in Gottes Willen, die Herten bewegen,
Im Thon:

"Werde munter, mein Gemüthe"

1. Jesu! du König der Ehren
Der Gläubigen Zuversicht
Du woltest unsz jetzund lehren
Dasz vor deinem angesicht,
Unser Lippen, Zung und Mund,
Ja mehr unsers Hertzens Grund
Dir mög ein Lob-Opfer bringen
Und ein Bekäntnisz-Lied singen

Ein Erinnerungs Lied zu Gott, an einem
Gedächtnis-Tage betrachtet (27 stan-
zas)

In welchem hertzlich zu Gemüthe ge-
führet wird wie
übel schlecht und elend es stehet, an-
gesehen was
Gott fur Leib und Seel zu Dienste ge-
schencket, mit
hertzlicher Bitte, dasz Gott wolte bes-
sern ersetzen
und heilen, was mangel und Schaden
seyn, dasz es möge
erkannt, und Gott zur Ehr dafur ge-
dancksaget werden.
Im Thon: "O Gott erbarm dich mein."

1. O Gott im Höchsten Thron
Durch Christum deinen Sohn
Wollest du unsz bereiten.
Ja durch deinen Geist leiten
Dasz wir jetzt in dieser Stunde
Dich ja von herten Grunde
Loben mit Zung und Munde.
7. Es ist wieder ein Jahr
Dahin verflossen zwar,
Dasz wir in disz Land kommen,
Darinnen frey zu wohnen
Ach! Was Wolthat wir genossen
Von deiner Gnad geflossen
Sie sind einmal ohn Massen.

Author of the Schwenckfelder Glaubens- Bekenntnisz, May 25, 1718

The importunity of the Protestant clergy in Silesia in representing to the imperial government in Liegnitz that it would be a simple matter for them to convert the Schwenckfelders to the Lutheran faith, provided the government would support their efforts, brought on the Jesuit Mission. On more than one occasion it was trustworthily admitted to the Schwenckfelders by the imperial counselors in Liegnitz that this was the direct cause of the sending, in 1719, of Jesuit missionaries who were either to convert, or to coerce them, into the Catholic faith. The first step in this determination was a summons to the Schwenckfelders, by the royal government in Vienna through the imperial authorities in Liegnitz, to appear be-

fore the latter on May 19, 1718. After a very courteous inquisition they were ordered to submit a statement, or so-called Confession of Faith, together with certain of their books. Such a statement the Schwenckfelders submitted on May 25, 1718 ("Erläuterung," ed. 1830, pp. 48-49), which was referred to later as their "öffentliches Glaubens-Bekenntnis" ("Erläuterung," p. 100). It bore the signatures of ten men prominent in their group: Balthasar Dietrich, Christoph Seibt, David Seibt, George Jäckel, George Anders, George Weiss, Caspar Hoffmann, Balthasar Hoffmann, Caspar Jäckel, Christoph Hoffmann. Which of these was the primary author of this document does not appear to be a matter of record, but George Weiss may safely be regarded as such in view of later similar contributions he made in defense of Schwenckfeldian doctrine.

Neither the original nor a copy of this "Glaubens-Bekenntnis" has been found to date. A garbled edition, including the original signatures, was printed in Jauer, Silesia, 1772, under the title: "Der Schwenckfelder Glaubens-Bekenntnisz welches sie auf kayserlichen Befehl an die damalige Regierung in Liegnitz eingeben müssen im Jahr 1718. den 25. May. denen Pensylvanischen Brüdern zu Lieb und Ehren ans Licht gegeben von etlichen Mitbekennern in Schlesien im Jahre Christi 1772," with a preface signed by the Silesians Balthasar Kurtz, Christoph Groh, and Carl Ehrenfried Heintze, dedicating it as a token of gratitude to their Schwenckfelder brethren in Pennsylvania for financial aid received in times of poverty and famine. The latter, however, were not pleased with this abbreviated edition and its preface and conclusion. Balthasar Hoffmann, one of the signers of the original document in 1718, now an aged man, remarked on seeing it that "it was not handed to the government in this form," which suggests that he was well enough acquainted with it to have been a co-author.

Touched by the kindly treatment accorded them by the authorities at Liegnitz on May 18, 1718, the Schwenckfelders composed a so-called "Dankschreiben" which they apparently submitted a week later, together with their

"Glaubens-Bekenntnisz," for it bears the same date, namely, May 25, 1718 (see Kadelbach, pp. 34-36), and the signatures of George Jäckel, Caspar Hoffmann, Hans Jäckel, Balthasar Dietrich, Christoph Seibt, David Seibt. These are the same names which, together with those of George Anders, George Weiss, Balthasar Hoffmann and Christopher Hoffmann, also appeared at the end of the "Glaubens-Bekenntnisz."

Upon their arrival in Görlitz, Saxony, after fleeing their native Silesia in 1726, the Schwenckfelders submitted a "Glaubens-Bekenntnisz" (see Kadelbach, pp. 137-147) which must have been identical with that submitted in Liegnitz in 1718, for the garbled form printed in 1772 agrees with it. It is to be regarded, therefore, as the authentic production of George Weiss.

Reply to Pater Milan, 1720

In December, 1719, two Jesuits, Pater Milan and Pater Regent arrived in Harpersdorf, principality of Liegnitz, and in Lauterseiffen, principality of Jauer, respectively. The first year of their stay was marked by very lenient methods in their purpose to win the Schwenckfelders into their church. One year later they began to ask questions on controversial subjects of doctrine and demanded that the Schwenckfelders give written answers, *e. g.*, about their grievance, or objection, to calling Christ a creature; about the passion of Christ, the glory of Christ and His humanity; about the omnipresence of Christ, and about the church, faith, free will, and the Word of God. Included in the answers of the Schwenckfelders to these controversial questions and discussions is a "Brief and fundamental statement of our faith on the points at issue," and in conclusion, an answer to the question why no Schwenckfelder in the principality of Liegnitz has been converted to the Catholic faith.

Christopher Schultz, the author of the "Erläuterung," says, in a footnote at the beginning of this chapter of questions (p. 85, ed. 1830), that George Weiss in the name of the others wielded the pen in answering the questions of the missionaries; that he was a very remarkable man; that his demeanor, and appearance were extraordinarily unassuming and

plain; that on the other hand his intellectual qualities were of such eminence as seldom found, which enabled him to attain to a good knowledge of languages and other matters; that he had also a devout zeal for true piety, which he showed in his untiring diligence in his office as leader (to which he was appointed here in Pennsylvania), until his death in March, 1740.

Pater Regent in Lauterseifen submitted a series of ten similar questions for answer to the aged and prominent Schwenckfelder of that place, George Hauptmann; December 14, 1720, after he had already thoroughly questioned the Schwenckfelder group there ("Erläuterung," pp. 137-148).

His Catechism

The Christian catechism prepared by George Weiss, begun in Saxony in 1733, and continued in Pennsylvania until 1740, was used in his instruction of the young people. Its contents included the entire orthodox and thorough doctrine, concerning God's counsel and will for the salvation of mankind, through Christ in the Holy Spirit, according to the content of Holy Scripture. As an easy means of memorizing and making the subject matter intelligible, he employed the Socratic method of question and answer. Its purpose was to present Christian teaching and faith as a profitable guide to Christian youth as well as a guide and form for Christian parents and "House Fathers." Moreover, he hoped that this instruction might redeem his people from ignorance and spiritual relapse into which they had fallen. In the preface to the Weiss catechism, presumably written by Balthasar Hoffmann, it is stated that Weiss worked daily and with great diligence on this work with youth until 1740 when God released him from this paltry life. This also is the reason why several points have been left incomplete.

Formal catechetical instruction usually took place on Sunday afternoons and sometimes during the evenings. Topics were prepared beforehand by pupils at the suggestion of the teacher. Between sessions passages were expounded by letter.

The language employed in his catechism is clear and logical, a simple style

appropriate for the understanding of children. Frequently he repeats for emphasis without becoming monotonous. His prepared settings for various doctrinal subjects are presented in an interesting and fascinating manner. He was careful to make practical applications of his Scriptural teachings and to apply them to life situations for his pupils. The entire work breathes forth a spirit of sincerity and earnestness. Possibly the most interesting consideration in the entire catechism is the section on Prayer containing a discussion of the Lord's Prayer.

Content

The topic discussed in the first section is on the Creation, covering 261 questions and answers. From this consideration Weiss pointed out the great moral learned from the creation, *i. e.*, a belief in an omniscient God, eternal and all powerful, whom we learn to fear, love and trust. This section also includes a discussion on angelology and demonology.

The second section covers the general theme of Prayer with an elaboration on twelve necessary and useful points or doctrines on Prayer discussed in 278 questions and answers. Weiss teaches, with Scriptural authority, that it is necessary to prepare beforehand for prayer, since prayer is a lovely, precious, necessary work, very pleasing unto God. We are assured that all who pray to God shall be heard and a real true prayer which shall appease God, must be made in and through the name of Christ. Moreover, one shall know thoroughly the things for which to pray and in what manner one shall petition for them. A living faith belongs to a real and earnest prayer. Weiss teaches that man is not confined to a certain place, time and method in prayer to God, but real prayer can be made at all times, anywhere in spirit and in truth. Real Christian prayer must be made with constant persistence and be accompanied by an humble, penitent consecrated heart. Concerning the method or technique Weiss says one must have a proper, pure and true understanding in the words of prayer, which is to be addressed, not alone to God the Father, but also to His

Son our Lord Jesus Christ. In conclusion, one shall not merely pray, but also await the gracious voice and answer of the Lord.

This general section on Prayer is continued by a fascinating and profitable discussion on the Lord's Prayer, covering 259 questions and answers.

The following section contains useful questions on the Apostles' Creed and its confession. Article one discusses God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth, with 69 questions and answers; article two under 53 questions, the subject of Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord; article three under 42 questions, the doctrine, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary; and in conclusion, article four under 42 questions, the point, Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried.

The fifth section contains 136 useful questions on the sacred Ten Commandments. It includes a short, intensive and comprehensive summary and understanding of the entire law of Moses in which all other Commandments are included in brief content.

The sixth section, with 131 questions, deals with the Christian Church. This is followed by a discussion of 64 questions of the Confession of Christ (*i. e.*, Peter's Confession, Matthew 16:13-19). It considers the form of His flesh, the only begotten Son of the Father, how He is the only begotten and beloved Son of God, and the first born. The last point is the longest one in this section.

The origin of Holy Baptism and how it was instituted is discussed under 166 questions. A lengthy discussion on the Lord's Supper follows under 271 questions. The presentation considers how it was instituted, for what purpose, what the Lord said in its institution, what Paul wrote concerning it, and the institution or form of the cup.

The concluding topic on marriage, under 88 questions, discusses what marriage is and is called, and by whom and how it was instituted.

Institution of the Schwenckfelder Memorial Day, September 24, 1734

According to the Old Style Calendar, the Schwenckfelders landed at Philadel-

phia on Sunday, September 11, 1734. On the following day, September 12th, they promised allegiance to the Crown of Great Britain, and on the day after that, which was Tuesday, September 13th, George Weiss led his flock in the observance of thanksgiving for a safe deliverance from Old World intolerance and oppression. This was the origin of the Schwenckfelder Memorial Day which has been observed ever since annually, without a break. This is an historical fact, not merely a tradition.

On September 3, 1752, the English Calendar Amendment Act went into effect, which moved the calendar ahead eleven days. Consequently, September 13th, the original date of Memorial Day, became September 24th. This change is substantiated by Christopher Schultz, Sr., in his "Historische Anmerkungen," saying in 1753, that the Memorial Day of their arrival in this country has been observed every year, and that by the change in the calendar it was decided to observe it on September 24th.

George Weiss himself says, in 1737, in his "Erinnerungs-Schreiben," "At the Memorial Day of the arrival in this country as well as at general meetings, I portrayed everything clearly." That is, he gave a summary of the Schwenckfelder movement and the conditions that obtained in the forty years preceding the migration.

Christopher Schultz, Sr., a pupil of George Weiss, in a preface written March 19, 1782, to a manuscript volume of Memorial Day Sermons left by him, says that George Weiss conducted the services on the first Memorial Day and upon each anniversary thereof as long as he lived (that is, from 1734-1739). Weiss died in March, 1740, having, therefore, conducted six Memorial Day services. From 1740 to 1763, Balthasar Hoffmann (having been chosen to take Weiss' place), conducted these annual services and kept notes, or extracts, of all his Memorial Day sermons, by request. After 1763, Christopher Schultz took the responsibility for the celebration of this occasion until 1787, assisted by Christopher Kriebel, and Christopher Hoffmann.

In what particular spot in Philadelphia, or on its outskirts, the first Mem-

orial Day was conducted by Weiss does not appear to have been recorded; it was probably in a vacant wooded lot. Nor has any record been found regarding the place of the succeeding five such services conducted by him. On September 24, 1735, he addressed a letter at Falckner Schwamm (Frederick) to Balthasar Hoffmann, in which, however, he does not mention having celebrated Memorial Day recently. But he does refer to the scattered condition of the group in these words: "Gott gebe dasz wir uns diese gefährliche und verwirrete Zeit, da so wunderbahre meynungen auf die Bahn kommen, desgleichen auch unsere Zerstreuung lassen eine Erinnerung seyn, uns allenthalben weiter umzusehen und in allem der Wahrheit nachzuforschen." After the observance of the first Thanksgiving, during the autumn of 1734 and the spring of 1735, the Schwenckfelder flock had scattered between Philadelphia, Germantown, Towamencin, Skippack, Frederick, Goshenhoppen, Macungie and Oley to the extreme end of fifty miles from the landing place. The individual families were facing undreamt-of hardships, toil, privations, anxiety for the safety and welfare of their children and for daily food, shelter and raiment, in the woods of Pennsylvania. They were without means of conveyance, except on foot, later on horseback, over very primitive roads, or pathways, through the open country and the dense forests.

Under all these circumstances, it is quite evident that there could have been no gathering together of the people from the many districts, into one place, even of the fathers only, for the annual thanksgiving service in the first several years of their life in this country. At Frederick (Falckner Schwamm), where George Weiss was on September 24, 1735, a small colony of these pioneers was located: Balthasar Heydrick and family, George Heebner, Hans Heebner, Dr. Melchior Heebner, and their families. With this small group, therefore, George Weiss must have been visiting at that time. Very probably he arrived in time to observe the second Memorial Day, September 13 (old style), 1735. The fact that the Old Style Calendar remained in force until 1752 explains why he writes a letter on September 24, 1735,

without referring to that day as being Memorial Day.

All the worship services that were held by him until 1738 were held with individual families as he visited them from time to time in their primitive log-cabin dwellings. After that date, he came to one appointed dwelling in each district at regular times to conduct services to which all the families in that particular district were invited. The same procedure pertained to Memorial Day services.

"There were many sects which were driven to America by religious persecutions, but of them all the Schwenckfelders are the only one which established, and since steadily maintained, a Memorial Day to commemorate its deliverance and give thanks to the Lord for it. To George Weiss belongs an honor which cannot be accorded to John Robinson, William Penn, or George Calvert. The beautiful example set by German was followed neither by Pilgrim nor Quaker."—(Samuel W. Pennypacker.)

Contract Between George Weiss and His Congregation

When George Weiss was appointed the spiritual leader of the Schwenckfelders in November, 1735, he accepted that office by a handclasp and agreed to the conditions listed below.

According to the gifts he possessed he would preach the pure theological and orthodox doctrine, touching the points of Christian faith, exposition of Scriptural passages, discussion and explanation of hymns and similar material. Aside from the regular Sunday worship services, both morning and afternoon, as well as on festival days, he agreed to conduct weekly devotions with Scriptural expositions at Skippack, Goshenhoppen and elsewhere. On request he promised to instruct, catechize and examine the youth in the fundamental articles of Christian faith and doctrine and on questions regarding Christianity, providing an incentive to practice these Christian truths in daily life.

Furthermore, he promised formal instruction to those contemplating matrimony, presenting a true conception of, and regard for, the married state. The youth shall inform their parents or the

"Aeltesten" concerning their intentions. Short engagement periods are to be encouraged, as well as simple marriage ceremonies. Since they are released from infant baptism, parents are to present their children in prayer to God within eight days after birth, and continually commend them to God in prayer. The child shall be nourished from its earliest life according to the will, honor and fear of God. Children shall be instructed to read and write as early as possible; this is to be followed by catechetical instruction until the tenth year. At this time they shall be examined in regard to confession and the regulations of the congregation, then, in an orderly way at the completion of the fifteenth year, be accepted as members of the congregation.

The election of two "Aeltesten" was accepted by a hand clasp and a promise to perform their respective duties. They pledged themselves to assist and support the minister, as well as help foster and maintain the congregation. They shall preserve the sanctity of the ten commandments and penalize or eliminate such who may transgress against them; they shall maintain good discipline regarding the garb, preventing any offensive modes which will be a hindrance, scandal or stumbling block to devotional services. They are to supervise all necessary transactions concerning the business of the congregation; they shall advise individuals about suitable apprenticeships in the acceptance of positions. Members of the congregation are encouraged to confer with these officers in their various undertakings, both secular and spiritual.

These articles are regarded as a Christian necessity for the congregation, and the persons signing this contract recognize the above named George Weiss to be fitted with such a disposition that he will apply these regulations according to Scripture. Therefore, they are entrusted to his care as the service of a pastor.

Ideals and Motives

George Weiss was a very conscientious, intelligent, modest, and humble man. Prompted by a sincere motive to aid his Schwenckfelder brethren, who

had been without religious leadership and instruction since the death of George Hauptmann of Lauterseiffen, Silesia, 1721, he conceived the plan of writing short letters on religious topics, passages of Scripture, and hymns, to various individuals in the Schwenckfelder group, after they had fled from Silesia to Saxony. He came to this decision voluntarily, about May, 1732, and six months later, November 30, 1732, wrote a paper, which he addressed to "Dear friends," his co-believers in the Schwenckfelder faith, with whom he had fled into Saxony. He read it to them publicly, stating the reasons for the course he had been taking for that period of time.

This paper bears the title: "Beweg-Ursachen: Warum ich mich in disz mein bisherige Fürnehmen eingelassen habe," i. e., "Motivating reasons for my hitherto prevailing undertaking." He states that as a youth he led a quiet, secluded life at home, and made little ado about his studies, did not desire to attract attention, and intends to refrain from doing so in the future, for it is but little and insignificant as compared with the great mass. He acquired as much learning as was possible under poverty-stricken conditions and frequent illnesses. Lack of means prevented him from entering upon a study of languages, but, he says, he had access to such books and writings, at hand or borrowed, as few of the Schwenckfelders had from the beginning of the movement. He attained the ability to study and meditate upon Scripture not only in the German language but also in other languages. His father, Caspar Weiss, was a talented man, who had a profound conception of Christian doctrine as well as the gift of good speech. The son says he lacked this gift, but could express his thoughts through the pen. The father could write only by printing letters. After writing a few lines his hand would tremble so that he could not continue. Much illness and many other afflictions prevented him from much study.

By the migration from his fatherland, Silesia, George Weiss says, November 30, 1732, he was freed from his ceaseless linen-weaving trade and is now making a living by spinning. Earlier he had had the inclination to engage in vari-

ous activities, but was hindered well-nigh a dozen times, which impelled the belief that God had a purpose in this. In recent years he was frequently admonished not to bury his talent, but to let it work. He felt that God had granted him a fairly good understanding of, and insight into, the teachings of Schwenckfeld, and, not wishing to be accused of keeping this knowledge to himself, he decided to share it with others on condition that everything be examined and considered on the basis of Scripture, Christian faith, and pure doctrine. For twenty years he had felt impelled to such work, but always conquered the thought, because he felt unworthy, for doctrine without life is worthless. He feared also that promulgating Schwenckfeldian doctrine might arouse the antagonists to call them sectarians and bring persecutions upon them. Nevertheless, he decided to risk it. Then too, the fact that his parents in their afflictions having been the recipients of many gifts and kindnesses which he also enjoyed, caused him to reflect how he might at some time show his gratitude, and for that reason also he decided on the present course.

He was encouraged not a little to undertake this work by the fact that now and then someone, occasionally a youth, inquired about Schwenckfeldian doctrine and desired enlightenment on some specific point, at a time when it appeared as though everything was at low ebb among the group. He says he noticed in recent years how God was protecting the plain truth as found in that doctrine, and that He was not permitting the works of Schwenckfeld to be lost. Yea, even such as were thought to have been lost, now passed from hand to hand, all of which inclined him to think that he should devote his services thereto.

In continuing this work of expounding and spreading Schwenckfeldian doctrine, which he began six months prior to the writing of this statement, he begs that he be not looked upon by them as a teacher, overseer, or leader, and that what he speaks or writes shall not be considered infallible. He believed and felt assured in his heart that God in the time of the Reformation, through faithful witnesses among the Confessors of the glory of Christ, brought to light a correct and

clear testimony of true doctrine whereby He revealed himself again to the unrepentant world, disclosed the meaning of Holy Scripture, and explained very clearly every article of Christian faith. He noticed that such truth was rejected, despised and slandered not only by so-called Christendom in general, but hindered by the indolence, negligence and carelessness of his own group to whom such fine testimony had been given by the grace of God. It is his wish that what he writes may be read and re-read, reflected upon and considered, and compared with their plain theological doctrine, also with Holy Scripture, and to be accepted only if found in harmony therewith. May God grant that henceforth they may be more concerned about the truth than has been the case hitherto; that in such clear light, they may not miss the goal. He hopes they will not be offended at his frank statement whereby he disclosed his heart and thought, and commends himself to their prayers; he will do likewise for them as far as his weakness enables him, and especially for those in whom there is yet some zeal to concern themselves about their salvation.

The above statement is the first document in a manuscript volume of 643 pages of letters and writings by George Weiss, which were collected and copied by Balthasar Hoffmann in 1743, and re-copied presumably also by Hoffmann in 1751. It contains 79 pieces written between 1727 (not 1732, as title says) and 1740, to various individuals of the Schwenckfelder group which fled from Silesia into Saxony in 1726 and later. Of these, 39 were written in Saxony and 40 in Pennsylvania.

Letters

His ideals and motives appear also in his many letters. It was his belief that they could do as much good as if he came to the individual homes to conduct worship services ten times each week, provided the recipients would not read them superficially once or twice, but read and re-read them and pass them on to others. Furthermore, he found that personal visits often prevented discussion of religious or theological topics by affording opportunity for many other topics of conversation. His great modesty, humil-

ity, simplicity, and selflessness helped him to put himself on a par with his addressees and to write to them in simple language in such a way as to make them feel that he did not think himself better than they, and needed to follow his own advice and instruction.

His approaches in these letters were most diplomatic. He endeavored always to find a point of contact which would give him an excuse for opening correspondence, as these examples give evidence:

In a letter to Melchior Kriebel, Sr., November 9, 1732, he says he is sending him an elucidation of Genesis 2:7, as a token of his sincere regard for him and his family.

To Melchior Kriebel, Jr., he writes, saying they have been good acquaintances and have exchanged mutual confidences, hence he is sending him his meditations on Wisdom 2:23 and asks him to consider them well, and to see whether they harmonize with Holy Scripture and their Christian doctrine; eternal life is to know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. This is the basic Schwenckfeldian doctrine: The saving knowledge of Christ. Such knowledge does not come from without, or from the letter, but from God. It is a partaking of the divine, in the heart of the believer, a tasting and seeing that the Lord is good. This is life eternal.

To Caspar Kriebel he writes, October 2, 1732, about Genesis 1:26, saying that Caspar and he have been living for some time in pleasant neighborly relationship; he thinks they should both be applying themselves to spiritual edification, and therefore he undertook a study of this verse of Scripture for his own and Caspar's instruction.

Writing to Balthasar Yeakel, November 16, 1732, he says it has been his custom for the past half year to write his thoughts on some verse of Scripture and give or send it to one of their Schwenckfelder group, and on this occasion wants to send him a similar letter.

To three Schultz brothers (whether George, Melchior and Christopher, or George, Melchior and David, cousins of the former trio, is uncertain), he says, "Although we did not know each other in Silesia, here (*i. e.*, in Saxony) there

has been opportunity to become better acquainted. In order that their association with each other may not be spent altogether in conversation about temporal, often useless, things, he wrote for them an exposition of Luke 13:24, Strive to enter in by the narrow door," etc.

On September 8, 1732, to Balthasar Anders, he writes, that they knew each other in Silesia, but through Weiss' flight from there they became separated. Now that Balthasar has come also, quite unexpectedly, he wishes to give him his thoughts on a verse of Scripture.

Many of his letters were written in answer to questions sent to him. Among these are two which he wrote to A. W., undoubtedly Abraham Wagner, the physician, who cited an opinion of Martin John, Jr. George Weiss explained to Wagner that Martin John had been a reader of various theological writers, in search of a great light which it was rumored was about to arise, brighter than that of Caspar Schwenckfeld. Nevertheless, shortly before his death, Martin John told Caspar Weiss that he did not find it so, but that in his opinion the sun was in its zenith and shone more brightly in the time of Schwenckfeld and his co-believers than in their own time. In this letter Weiss tried to warn Wagner against the philosophies then deluging Christendom. Weiss' profound knowledge of Scripture appears in the expositions of Scripture found in these letters, as well as his thorough acquaintance with the Septuagint, the Hebrew and the Latin Bibles, the works of Schwenckfeld, Reiszner, Johann Heyd, Hoburg, Hiller, and, on the other hand, Sebastian Franck and Jacob Böhme. This throws light on his earlier statement that in his father's house he had access to an uncommon wealth of literature, the source of his education and learning.

Having learned that George Schultz, Sr., had struggled to save enough out of his hard-earned money to pay for the copying of Adam Reiszner's "Psalm-Büchlein," he addressed to him in a letter, an exposition of Colossians 3:16, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with

grace in your hearts unto God. Although Christians are taught by Christ, the eternal Word, through the Holy Spirit, yet the external man must also receive instruction, as, for example, through hymns and songs. Therefore, read the hymns, repeat them, reflect upon them; this is the way to instruct ourselves in all the points of Christian faith and doctrine, which are contained therein; there are also admonitions in the hymns, to fear God, trust, love and reverence Him, and to live a life pleasing to Him and one's fellow-man. The inward singing in the heart, must be to the King and Savior, Jesus Christ." It is worthy of note that he stresses the repeating and reflecting upon hymns rather than the actual singing. Occasionally he sent expositions of hymns to some of the Schwenckfelder group. No one among them was better fitted than he to speak on hymns and hymnology, for that was one of his special fields.

His pupil, young Christopher Schultz, he addressed: My dear child. He commends his study of Scripture and other books, in which fact he rejoices because it is rarely found in his day. In other letters he answers the boy's questions, and occasionally addresses a letter on some special topic to all three of the young Schultz brothers.

Letter to His Mother

In the collection of George Weiss' letters there is but one to his mother. She had remained in Silesia when her son and his wife, and most of her friends, fled to Saxony in 1726. Prior thereto she had lost her husband and two children by death. He wrote it in Saxony, October 28, 1727, on the theme of Psalm 25:17: The troubles of my heart are enlarged; Oh! bring Thou me out of my distresses.

"Sincerely beloved Mother! Considerable time has elapsed since we last saw each other, or spoke with each other, which no doubt often grieves you, and makes you long for me. As for me, when I hear that you are well, and are not too much in need of temporal things, I am quite satisfied. But, if we could meet and could be of help to one another in those things which edify us in our Chris-

tian life, that would be joy for me. And with that in mind, I want to send you my thoughts on the above verse.

"It is the nature of trouble that when the inner man, in heart, soul and thoughts becomes distressed, he is sorrowful in outward appearance. God visits man with many kinds of sorrows, as illness, loss of property to the extent that he has to live in poverty and anxiety; parents are deprived of children, and children of parents; good and intimate friends are separated by death. But these are not the sorrows of which the Psalmist speaks. He has reference to the sorrows over sin and over the realization of its power over human nature. For that reason there are always sorrows in the heart. Paul writes, Romans 5:2-5: We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we also rejoice in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation worketh steadfastness; and steadfastness, approvedness; and approvedness, hope; and hope putteth not to shame, because the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which was given unto us . . . Oh! Thou faithful Emanuel! Thou who didst come into such misery, distress and sorrow for our salvation, and didst break a way through, be Thou our Moses and Aaron, our only leader and high priest. Do Thou alone lead me, yea, us all, out of this distress, and as there physically the sea of death was broken through, and the enemy's forces overcome, do Thou accomplish this in us spiritually. Go Thou before us, lead and direct us that we may penetrate the sea of death, and escape from our enemies who desire to get us into their power; and that we through such flight may overcome and conquer them; that we may struggle through to Thee, into the kingdom of eternal blessedness. Amen. That we may seek and obtain this truly from our leader Jesus Christ, is my wish for you and me, from the bottom of my heart. Amen."

In July, 1733, this correspondence in Saxony apparently ceased, being interrupted by the necessity of migrating once more, and this time to a New World. It was not resumed until the Schwenckfelders had become settled, to a certain extent, in Pennsylvania. First in this New World period of correspondence, we

find seven letters of considerable length, written to Balthasar Hoffmann, the former Schwenckfelder envoy to Vienna from 1721 to 1725. These letters were written between March 3 and September 24, 1735, from Philadelphia, Germantown, Falekner Schwamm (Frederick) and Macungie. They are masterpieces of scholarliness, accuracy, faithfulness, and diligent meditation in the study and explanation of Scripture and Christian doctrine, called forth in answer to Hoffmann's difficult questions on: True and living faith, its power and activity; the Apostolic Mission; the Apostolic Ministry; the breaking of bread, etc. They are, in reality, fine, logical treatises, with substantial Scriptural bases. In defining the term Apostle, Weiss cites the Schwenckfelder writer, Johann Heyd's "Biblisches Namenbuch," which says: "Next to the twelve, the name Apostle belongs also to all others who are taught of God, sent as teachers and preachers, into whose heart God, through the Holy Spirit, has written His living Word and eternal Gospel (II Corinthians 3), and having laid it into their mouths (Jeremiah 1), sends them to preach it.

Weiss found 1735 to 1738 an exceedingly difficult period for carrying on religious instruction among his widely scattered people who were occupied with the struggle for homes, daily food and raiment. Hence there are also few letters extant of that period, but in 1738 he went to work with renewed zeal and his correspondence flourished again. All of his letters of the latter period are dated at Skippack where he was then living. For example, he answered David Seipt's questions on John 6:44, about the eternal Word, about being named after Schwenckfeld, and about various authors. He advised against reading all kinds of authors unless one had spiritual insight and discriminating judgment. He put Schwenckfeld foremost among theological writers because Schwenckfeld discriminates better between God's kingdom and the temporal kingdom; he cited both Hiller's and Hoburg's opinions; he said he was not ashamed to be called a Schwenckfelder, for Schwenckfeld showed men the straight way to Christ, made the Scriptures more easily under-

stood, and in this respect had been of great help to him.

He wrote similar letters of instruction in Scripture, as well as meditations on hymns, to the three orphan Schultz brothers; to Christopher separately, signing it "dein Treuer Paedagogus;" also to many others; and to Christopher Wiegner and his Moravian friends, Spangenberg and Gruber.

OTHER WRITINGS

"Meditationes"

In 1720-1730 George Weiss composed poetic writings, calling them "Meditationes," that is, studies and spiritual explanations of the names of different patriarchs and prophets in the Old Testament and of the evangelists and apostles in the New Testament with expositions of the hidden mysteries bearing on Christ the Son of God. These simple rhymes he added to the hymn collection, originally made by his father, Caspar Weiss, and which he completed and copied.

Views on Sacraments

At some time during the year 1720, perhaps at request of the Jesuit Mission, George Weiss wrote a document setting forth the difference between the true and the false interpretation of the Sacraments: "Kurtzer Unterschied und Gegen-ein-andersetzung des wahren u. falschen Verstandes bei den Handlungen der Sacramente." A section of this was included by Christopher Schultz in the "Erläuterung" (ed. 1830, p. 341 sq.). The Rev. Joshua Schultz reprinted the whole document in 1875, together with one by Balthasar Hoffmann, under the title: "Glaubens-Lehren und Bekenntnisse der zwei ersten Predigern der Schwenckfelder in Amerika, von den Sacramenten."

Suggestions for a New Mode of Life

After having accepted, by request, the religious leadership of the Schwenckfelders in Saxony some time prior to their departure for the New World, George Weiss, on April 13, 1734, wrote a paper surveying the general condition of the Schwenckfelders and giving suggestions for their future mode of life and advising, among other things, the pur-

suit of agriculture. In this he may have been assisted by the ideas of others of the group. He undoubtedly had a hand also in the answer written in June, 1733, to Count Zinzendorf's urgent invitation to unite with his church. This the Schwenckfelders consistently refused.

An Admonitory Letter

Very conscientiously and with grave concern, George Weiss conducted his early ministry to the Schwenckfelders in Pennsylvania, in the earnest hope of building a strong religious community. He was wont to conduct services as he visited the individual families in their houses, in widely separated areas. By 1737 this method of procedure became very discouraging to him, calling forth the following admonitory letter, addressed to each and every Schwenckfelder:

Erinnerungs-Schreiben

an alle und jede Schwenckfelder,
was ich mich bey gegenwärtigem
verwirreten und Erbarmungs-wür-
tigem zustande, nach meinem Ge-
wissen, gegen sie zuverhalten ge-
dencke,

December 15, 1737

"About two hundred and twenty years ago, God pointed out through faithful witnesses, the falling away from Christ and His truth, disclosed the serious idolatry as well as the grave misuse of the service of the Christian Church and other horrible errors concerning the knowledge of Christ and the entire Christian doctrine. On the other hand He revealed and brought to the light the true knowledge of Christ, the true edification of the Christian Church, a pure Christian theology according to Apostolic testimony and the confession of Christian faith, as also a wholesome, correct and pure conception of the Holy Scriptures and of the institutions of Christ. Notwithstanding the vehement ravings of Satan, through various horrible persecutions and tyranny, against such revealed truth, He has preserved it unto this day, not permitting it to perish or deteriorate, nor to be removed from the earth. And when in past years in Germany in Europe, there was no longer room for it, He quite unexpectedly

guided it to Pennsylvania, in America, and there brought it into real freedom. When we earnestly reflect upon this, it is enough to break one's heart, or bring tears, yet it appears that those who experienced such grace either have no regard for it, regard it lightly, or despise it, that I do not say tread it under foot. From the beginning, when God revealed this truth, there were those who confirmed it by a fine confession, the humble, and at times also the learned; there were not only those who confessed it with the mouth, but also with a pious Christian life, although there were many weeds among them. Yet there was a large number who showed by love to God and their neighbors what they confessed with the mouth, reminded and admonished each other, as their writings show. Until in the last forty years generally speaking there was no one who either by a clear testimony supported the truth, or practiced it by a Christian life. I say advisedly, generally speaking, for what in such confusion God in secret brought out by the roots, is known to Him. I speak as it appeared outwardly. For this reason for a long time I hesitated to use the term: Confessors of the truth, because of that of which one commonly spoke, or confessed outwardly, one never had a foundation in the heart. I would rather say: Those who have the testimony of the truth in their hands. I will only briefly state here what conditions pertain now among us unfaithful people. Whoever searches his own conscience will find more than words can tell. At the Memorial Day of the arrival in this country, as well as at general meeting-days, I portrayed everything clearly. A few hymns also were composed for this reason. If anyone wants words, he may read my "Kurtzen Entwurff" which I composed in Berthelsdorff, as well as the article regarding apparel. With regard to myself, I must of course not give myself any preference, for although God gave me intelligence so that in early youth I learned to grasp our theology and early felt drawn by His grace (which I well realize), yet I was very faithless to it, and fell into such misdemeanor that my heart trembles when I think of it, and my eyes fill with tears, I am not ashamed to confess this

with tongue and pen before everybody to the honor of God and to my disgrace, and not without tears do I confirm it by this writing. Yet the unfathomable mercy of God has borne such patience with me poor, wretched creature, which is greatly to be wondered at. Yea, with such kindness, he spurred me on, wooed and drew me by suffering, in that from youth on He laid upon me much illness, a dejected mood, with many trials, spiritual and physical, inwardly and outwardly, twice through the loss of my property, and the death of my dear ones, and in innumerable ways afflicted me, until He had humbled and thoroughly broken my wicked nature, as in the last years in Saxony and here in Pennsylvania, from time to time he gave me to see more distinctly the unfathomable corruption of the human race, and foremost of myself, also to recognize tenderly the unmeasurable love of God, to flee and to avoid the World and its wicked ways. Hence I began to acquire a love and desire more than ever before to edify myself in the mysteries of God and in the knowledge of Christ wherein is my soul's salvation. Under such circumstances, God has placed me into such a straightened position, from which I cannot readily extricate myself, namely, that I am in the midst of the unfaithful group whom God has led into Pennsylvania with the testimony of truth, and am called their leader, although I would a thousand times rather live under a Christian leader. Necessity compels me therefore to declare to you in writing what is in my mind.

While we were still in Germany, some, who had reflected on my insight and knowledge, urged me to organize a Christian Congregation. The fact that it was not permissible in Germany because of the oppression, gave me an honorable excuse, for it was quite clear to me that for the building of a Christian congregation, real Christian members were necessary. Without these it would be only hypocrisy, yea more, merely a deception by Satan. For some time I have been wishing, and not without tears, that I could have a few people who in Christian confidence could hold Christian colloquies or discussions about our soul's salvation, Christian faith and the Scrip-

tures, particularly when I noticed the lamentable decline among us, in doctrine as well as in life, I was sincerely grieved, and wondered whether something might be done to alleviate this condition. These were the two reasons why I began to write letters to one, then to another. More can be found about this in the "Beweg-Ursachen," which preceded the letters, and which I read publicly at one time. But I was not able to accomplish anything in this respect. In Berthelsdorf I began to conduct prayer-meetings also for this purpose, and did so not of my own initiative, but inquired of others whether it would be of value to them. They answered affirmatively, nevertheless the desired benefit has not yet appeared. When we arrived in this country, and I perceived the great concern, selfishness, desire and love, greed and striving for the temporal, to the disadvantage of the salvation of the soul, I dismissed the matter. Although I was time and again reminded of it, I kept my eye on the young. But two years ago (*i. e.*, October, 1735) reasons presented themselves which I found myself compelled by conscience not to pass by, quite in the dark I decided on a way, as best I could, and once more asked whether there were some who were inclined to draw closer together, if only twelve, to edify each other in Christ, which would have been an example to the rest, to arouse them to join in. How many there were is obvious, and my hopes melted again.

Having tried this for a long while . . . I am compelled in order to spare my conscience, to adopt another method, to see whether it might be possible, so far as I am concerned, to forestall a Gideonitish idolatry—Judges 8:27—or a Jeroboamitish calf worship. Should you wish to use it as such, I hope to be pardoned in the sight of God. My ministry, for which I hope at this time to have a good assurance from God, is plainly enough indicated in the points of the contract, but was not understood. It consists in this: To reveal again and bring to light our declining Christian Theology, according to the gift given me. This neither calls for a formal worship, nor does it belong to a formal worship; a regular worship-service and a regular congrega-

tion belong together. We are not a regular congregation. How then shall we have a regular worship-service, as for a congregation? Nevertheless a regular worship-service was instituted, and held now here, now there, and do what one will, one cannot prevent it from becoming an established arrangement and custom, and it might easily happen that, if I should die, some fickle person, having some worldly wisdom, but without strength or savor, would permit himself to be used to step into such an arrangement and as far as outward appearances go, imitate it. . . . Hence I shall conduct services for the most part at the home of Christoph Kriebel; sometimes also at the home of Balthasar Yeakel. Yet I will not bind myself to any place for such services. Should this place fail me, God will provide another that will serve Him and me. I have preferred to choose this place because it is centrally located; those from the Swamp (Frederick) can reach it. It is also not too far from Goshenhoppen. The times for these services are Sundays and holidays, the memorial days of Christ, and a few others. Between times I will devote myself to special teaching and reminders on week days. Thereto I will select the weekly Gospel Lessons and other useful subjects. When a whole holiday comes in a week, I will not come to Towamencin. All other weeks I will come for a day, and one day of each week to Germantown, Goshenhoppen, or Macungie, as opportunity affords. On the fourth Sunday as a favor I will go to Goshenhoppen; then you may meet here at another place so that it will be made easier for Christoph Kriebel; and if Balthasar Hoffmann will be present with you, with some plan, I will be well satisfied. I want to put it on such a footing that when I die, it will die with me. . . . That I am proceeding cautiously in this matter, and on my own account, is due to the fact that I have good inducement, God having made me free of all dependents. I have neither children, nor anyone, for whom I would dutifully be responsible, after my death. The catechization of the young I will continue, but expect in this way to save more time for the same. One thing is to be regretted, that the parents do not have the courage to do

daily what I do at appointed times, for I am certain it would be of great benefit. I know that in part they cannot. But with many the question is whether they want to do so. With regard to marriages I will not withdraw my services, yet with this stipulation that I will give them only to those who are of our confession or at least intend to be; if they want to deceive me, they will have to answer for it. Engaged persons must subscribe to a certain point in accord with our confession, to me and to the elders. Young people must let themselves be instructed in matters pertaining to faith; I will not perform the marriage ceremony if they have not subscribed thereto. I will not discontinue prayer for little children, but do not want to create a precedent, and will not intrude upon anyone. If anyone wishes it of me, and I see that he is in earnest about it, I will gladly do so. But if anyone asks it of me merely for the sake of appearance, I will do what grace permits but the responsibility is his.

"Now, cherished and dear friends bearing our name! You may live wheresoever you will, and all those who hear of it, this is my decision and resolute determination. I hope, so far as I can perceive at present, that I can conscientiously carry it out. Therefore I trust that you will bear with me, and not force anything upon me against my conscience. I could not well accept it. I would not have come to taking this step so hastily had I not seen that we are tending to disintegration rather than to unification. I could prove that two years ago the prospects for unification were better than they are in general now. Each one says: Come to me! Spend the night with me! I receive more physical care than I deserve; moreover, I certainly do not seek it. My conscience is witness, God knows, when I say, I would at times prefer bread and salt, yes, miss a meal entirely if I knew how to attain to a Christian conversation or discussion. When occasionally a question is asked, it comes from a cold heart, only in a historical way, lacking zeal and earnestness, so that one does not know but that it is asked merely out of desire to know much. When one speaks, trying to lead to something of value, it is answered by 'yes,' and that is the end of it. There is the world and

time, and again the world, the world, at table and at work. And then I become distracted and diverted, but for all that I am not quite dead—from saying this or that. And so, sometimes I wish myself on my horse, and when I get on the horse, the first thought is generally: See! thus and so you spoke, and laughed. Maybe you offended one or another. However, I can say with good conscience that for a considerable number of years it has been my foremost wish that I might so live that I might give offence to no one, neither in word nor deed. Thus you can see what I have to contend with. I can truthfully say: Had I not had the freedom, in the woods, to pour out my heart to God, I often felt I would go to pieces, if I were permitted to do nothing but weep to the end of my life for myself and for others.

"In order that you, dear friends, may in this general letter have instruction how this state of confusion may be remedied, I want to admonish one and all of you, for the sake of God and the love of Jesus Christ, to take to heart the following points, and to put them into practice: (1) Be earnest about recognizing thoroughly the former wicked, sinful life . . . ; (2) the unspeakably great depravity and distress of the soul, the absolutely depraved nature, etc.; (3) with sincere remorse, sorrow and pain, with many repentant tears ask God's forgiveness; (4) to esteem oneself unworthy of the grace of God; (5) honest determination, by the grace of God, for the rest of life, to be concerned only about the soul's salvation, about God, and Christ; (6) to pray in deep humility without ceasing, until one feels in the heart a small spark of the grace of God and gives thanks to God, and to treasure it as a great treasure and beware never again to lose it; (7) daily prayer, morning and night; (8) form the habit to speak of spiritual things at table; avoid all temporal gossip, otherwise better maintain silence, or read something from the New Testament; it is well to avoid discussion of household affairs at table; (9) form the habit, when at work, to keep the mind fixed on God, and to recall what one read or heard on Sundays or holidays and to converse about it; (10) to make it a point to attend meet-

ings diligently; if impossible, because of distance or other good reason, then to read at home, the fine testimony of the truth as written by others.

"Now, dear friends, if any or some of you will accept this advice, I can assure you that you will be walking in a path that will lead you to the place where all will be well with you forever. . . . This letter is to be a testimony now and after my death, that I did not bury my talent, but desired to edify everyone."

Foundation and Confirmation of the Confession of Our Simple Christian Faith

On September 2, 1738, George Weiss addressed a writing to the Schwenckfelder religious body: *Ursache, Grund und Fundament der wahren Christlichen Orthodoxischen Theologie, wie auch gegründete bestättigung der Confessio unsers einfältigen Christlichen Glaubens:* "Foundation and Confirmation of the Confession of our simple Christian Faith. As an introduction he quoted the words of Paul, Titus 3:4-7: But when the kindness of God our Savior, and his love toward man, appeared, not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, etc. Weiss calls this passage of Scripture a brief but complete summary of Christian doctrine . . . "He who would become a partaker of this mystery of love, yea, come into the unfathomable union of an eternal fellowship, must learn to know truly this love . . . the love wherewith the Father loves the Son, and the Son the Father, must be poured out in their hearts. . . . Love prepares us with a wonderful power, for spiritual warfare against all evil, and supported by love, we earnestly determine to fight bravely against everything that is opposed to love. This then is the original, and genuine knowledge, or realization of God and Christ, in which the foundation for the repentance and betterment of man is laid. . . . Out of such a foundation there follows a true confession of faith which cannot be overthrown. . . . If one considers this correctly, it will soon appear what a fine and noble thing is a pure, true and stable confession of faith which is founded on God

and flows out of His revelation. I cannot believe that it is so easily said that God is not so much concerned about a confession. Opinions are opinions and will not stand before God. . . . But where truth is grounded in the heart and the confession flows therefrom, that is not simply an opinion, but a genuine confession . . . The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments harmonize in demanding a correct confession which is highly valued in the sight of God and will be rewarded by Him.

"Now, dearly beloved friends, this is what I wanted to lay before you and explain to you today, where the basis of my faith is laid. This writing is not a confession of my faith, but an indication of the foundation upon which it is grounded, namely, upon the revelation of the heavenly Father, through His Word, Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit. He has shown His priceless love in me poor, disloyal creature, and in this terrible time of confusion has so graciously taken pity on me poor sinner, and gradually has laid such a foundation of faith in my heart, and now daily confirms and strengthens me therein, regardless of all my weakness to which I am subject. It is, therefore, my earnest prayer to Him that He bear patiently with me, not to count my many transgressions against me, but to forgive like a father, and to support and lead me to the end of my soul's salvation in the work begun. Amen.

"I attest and affirm herewith that I have not received my knowledge through, or out of, books, nor out of Holy Scripture or other witnesses of the truth, but from God alone. As for my confession, I not only admit very gladly, but candidly and fearlessly, that I profess with tongue and pen the pure and true confession, or orthodox doctrine, of the sainted Caspar Schwenckfeld and his faithful fellow believers, and herewith most sincerely subscribe thereto. For I know definitely what excellent service these, in addition to Holy Scripture, have rendered me.

"For this reason, as long ago it was my heart's desire and joy to read and ponder such fine writings, so shall it henceforth by the help of God be my sole satisfaction and delight on earth,

yea, become more and more so, to study these testimonies in addition to the Scriptures, and through revelation by the grace of God and the light of the Holy Spirit, to grow and increase ever more and more in the foundation which is laid, so that by the grace of God I may attain to, and receive the measure accorded and proportioned to me. May God grant it. Amen.

"Is there anyone who desires to ground his Christianity according to the ten points presented in the general writing (Admonitory Letter of December, 1737) which was read publicly in the Christmas holidays? These still stand, and even more firmly in my mind. Indeed, they become daily firmer, and also the twelve points in the present writing. Does anyone desire, together with me, to instruct himself in the mysteries of the Christian faith and the true understanding of Holy Scripture, in and through the grace of Christ, he shall be dear and welcome to me, in Christ Jesus our common Savior. Yea, that shall be my greatest joy and delight, for it is that, and that only that I seek and desire, and for that I am praying. Then we will appoint special times, in addition to the regular so-called worship services, to engage prayerfully in such Christian discussion, and as true members and brethren in Christ, aim to become better acquainted with each other, to edify, admonish, encourage, comfort and strengthen each other, and extend a hand to each other in the grace tendered by Christ; to walk steadfastly forward in the way of the Lord to eternal life. Whoever then desires to take part in such Christian discussion, as stated above, for him I want to add a few conditions whereby he may examine himself whether in his heart and conscience he desires, first, to seek only the honor of God, and the praise of Christ Jesus. Secondly, that one does not seek any external knowledge of historical value only, but such as will be of service and value to the redemption of the soul. Thirdly, whether one from the bottom of the heart considers himself unworthy of such grace and hence beseeches God earnestly and sincerely for worthiness and that one may attain fitness thereto. Fourthly, whether one has the intention to seize upon grace when

it presents a benefit in, under or from such discussion, and to endeavor that such discussion, if not at first, then finally, shall not be futile, not only in respect to knowledge, but chiefly to life. Fifthly, whether one is minded to return gratefully to God such granted benefit and to honor and praise Him, not only in word but much rather in deed. Sixthly, whether one is concerned, as time and opportunity afford, to share this benefit with one's neighbor, provided he shows hunger and thirst for the same, and an interest to edify himself in spiritual things. Seventhly, whether we seriously desire so to live, that one would consciously offend no one, but as far as possible set a good example to everyone, in word and in deed.

"Dear friends! As in the very first statement which I made to you, I explained to you my genuine feeling, which those who were present will recall, and I hope I have since then acted candidly toward everyone, so today again I state my feelings. My conscience is witness that there is nothing false or deceptive therein against anyone, unless it be considered such when one tells the hard truth somewhat frankly, although this is done far too infrequently. But in future, if I live and this matter be not taken hold of better, which may happen, I can not help it, it is my duty, and one would not wish it otherwise. Would that you might be candid with me in the way of blessedness and true love to God! How soon we would and could be more confidential with each other! But I must and will commend it to God, etc. . . .

"With regard to my ministry among you, I explained rather clearly in my statement to you in the Christmas holidays what my views in the matter are, but I want to add a few points here. . . . First, in that statement I presented a plan to conduct services at stated times at different places, but I cannot abide by that plan because I do not wish to hold special services on holidays falling on weekdays. . . . Second, my services as far as the external stipulations of the congregation are concerned, remain an arrangement for the time being, that is, that one does the best under the circumstances until a better way can be instituted, praying that

whatever one cannot agree with will not be judged but graciously forgiven. I am compelled to this course for two reasons. First, one cannot build a Christian congregation, because there are no Christian members, and he who is to build it must be called by God. On the other hand, in this day of grace and with the gifts granted to me, unworthy one, my conscience forbids me to lay the matter down, out of my hands, because it is evident what things would look like in two or three years. If no more fruit appears when one drives daily, what would there be if everyone took his own course and disregarded the will of God? Third, because I cannot regard you as a congregation, and you are none, for the suspicious feelings, impure thoughts, derogatory remarks, secret jealousy, stubborn selfishness, amongst each other and toward each other, as well as toward me, prove very clearly that you possess nothing less than you do the attributes of a congregation. Therefore I cannot be guided by you, friends, but I must look to the ground and testimony of truth, and to my conscience, even though according to your reasoning it may often seem confusing. Fourth, from this it follows that I must keep the regulation of the services and other regulations in my hands. I say advisedly, in my hands, for I know and see that according to the foundation and testimony of the truth there is no knowledge or perception in you. And if there is any knowledge, it is literal, historical and sectarian, as for the rest, it is blindness and ignorance. Indeed, there is not even a desire or earnest to become wise in the sight of God. Therefore I must not place an idol in your hands in which you may glory after my death. . . . Fifth, I think anyone who has a little spark of intelligence will understand that it is my duty to drive or agitate toward the meetings and other regulations; there is no compulsion. . . . Sixth, I want to mention that I had copies made for distribution, of my previous writing, in order that anyone who is interested might have it. But I know that it got into strange hands and that it was said that I wrote letters hither and yon about the stiffneckedness of the Schwenckfelders, which is rather rough imprudence

... therefore I had only one copy made of this writing, which he who is interested may borrow. But it concerns only those who bear our name . . . I know full well that it will meet with the disparagement and mockery of some. . . . Strangers are not forbidden to come to our meetings . . . If any desire further explanation they are welcome to call on me personally or to correspond with me; it shall be my pleasure to do so, provided their object be not to draw me to them, but to hear the truth. And now dear and beloved friends, I have again poured out my feelings to you quite frankly; study it meanwhile."

A Brief but Thorough Answer to the Question: How may one know whether one is suffering persecution and deprivation of property for the sake of Christ and truth, or merely for an opinion?

"In the writings of theologians we find many and frequent warnings that we should be sure that we do not suffer persecution for false or erroneous opinions, instead of for the plain truth. Since some concern has been expressed about this, the following may be taken into consideration.

"First, the learned or unlearned among the various sects, who through their wits and reason attain a certain opinion, and interpret Scripture in accord with that opinion but, remaining without change of heart and betterment of life, fall into hypocrisy, and are persecuted. Their opinion cannot save them, for they do not suffer for truth but for their opinions or views.

"Secondly, others who love and fear God, are zealous towards Him, not with a carnal or a Scriptural zeal, but with sincerity, and being enlightened by Him, take issue with doctrines of another party, lead a Christian life and by the grace of God bear testimony of that which they have recognized as truth and point out to the other party their error, if then, on this account they are hated, slandered, persecuted and finally driven out, they sacrifice their possessions not because of an opinion, but on account of truth which God has revealed to them.

"Thirdly, are those who have the testimony of truth in hand and read, teach

and understand it; they are convinced, admit and confess that it is true and right. But if in their hearts they do not have this essential truth, without repentance and betterment of life, such are persecuted merely because they confirm the truth, but it can not help them toward salvation. God save us from being in this class.

"Fourthly, are those who both outwardly have the 'testimony of truth,' and inwardly also the living truth, Jesus Christ, in their hearts, and confess such with tongue and pen as well as with a Christian, God-fearing life, and are therefore persecuted and deprived of house and home and friends; these are certain that they have done it for the sake of truth, and may expect the reward of eternal life."

It was for the inward living truth as portrayed in the fourth point that George Weiss, Balthasar Hoffmann, Christopher Schultz and their successors in the early ministry of the Schwenckfelders worked most assiduously and unselfishly. George Weiss was a spiritually-minded man. He worked with gentle, conscientious, unshakable firmness to hold his Schwenckfelder flock outwardly to the "testimony of the truth"—as he and others were wont to speak of Schwenckfeld's doctrine—and to help them to secure inwardly the living truth (of which Schwenckfeld testified) in their hearts, and to confess it with tongue, pen and life.

George Weiss and the Moravians, 1736-1739

Thwarted in his efforts to win the Schwenckfelders permanently into his fold, Count Zinzendorf, the Moravian—under whose favor they had lived for eight years in Saxony after fleeing from Silesia—continued his schemes after they had settled in Pennsylvania. Terming himself the appointee of Jesus to reform the Schwenckfelder religion, the former apparent benefactor of the Schwenckfelders now became their last and final persecutor in the New World whither they had fled at great sacrifice, suffering and hardships, to obtain freedom and peace from all interference. Zinzendorf assigned to several representatives, or commissioners, the duty to accompany the Schwenckfelder emigrants to Penn-

sylvania, and to convert them to the Moravian faith. Two of these made their home with the third, who was Christopher Wiegner, their erstwhile liberal-minded Schwenckfelder acquaintance in Saxony. Christopher Wiegner was of an emotional disposition, easily moved to anger or to tears. On October 25, 1735, he traveled with George Weiss to Goshenhoppen. The other two commissioners probably were also in the company. George Weiss, the pastor of the Schwenckfelders, knew the designs of these Moravians and after his encounter with them on this journey amongst his flock in Goshenhoppen, he advocated that the Schwenckfelders appoint a minister and deacons. It was obvious to him that these traveling Moravian representatives were carrying out the instructions of their master to try to convert his flock to Lutheranism. It was necessary to be vigilant against disintegration. An election was held by nine Schwenckfelders. Weiss was chosen minister and Balthasar Hoffmann and David Seipt, deacons.

On April 4, 1736, August Gottlieb Spangenberg, Bishop of the Moravian Church, arrived at the home of Christopher Wiegner in Towamencin, making it his headquarters until his recall to Europe in 1739. Having come to convert the Schwenckfelders, he attended their meetings, adopted their mode of dress and associated with them in a subtle, docile manner. On June 20th of the same year, Spangenberg and associates, attending a Schwenckfelder meeting at Melchior Kriebel's home gave an address and prayer, which were offensive to Pastor Weiss. Thereupon the latter called on them at the Wiegner home during the succeeding week to tell them they were a disturbance in the Schwenckfelder services and should leave them alone; that it was useless for them to try to convert the Schwenckfelders to the Moravian Lutheran Church.

In these very critical times for the newly settled Schwenckfelder immigrants, George Weiss loyally and vigorously defended his widely scattered flock and the Schwenckfeldian doctrines by tongue and pen, answering the controversial questions raised by the Moravian representatives, *e. g.*, Whether the spoken word of a divinely gifted teacher,

by virtue of the power of God, can reach the soul; and: Does the external word and voice reach only the external man or does it go deeper? Weiss' answers by letter to all such questions were long and explicit.

In answer to the first question he said in part: If we want to learn to understand this thoroughly we must first of all learn that in Christian theology we find two kinds of Words. The first is the essential, self-existent Word of God, God Himself, the Son of God, and the second person of the Holy Trinity, the proofs of which in Scripture are so abundant that I do not think it necessary to cite them. The second is a spoken, literal, and written word which generally also is called God's word because it bears witness of the Living Word. This is called in Holy Scripture, a Holy Scripture, II Timothy 3:15; also simply Scripture, Romans 15:4; Scriptures, John 5:39, letter, and the like. The instances in Holy Scripture where the Word of God is explicitly mentioned if correctly examined, are those which speak of the Living Word of God.

"It is to be remembered that man consists of two parts; first, the soul, which is an invisible, imperishable and immortal spirit; second, the body, which is visible, tangible, corruptible, and without the soul is dead. Although the soul gives the body thought, reason and understanding, yet that is not the soul, but only an activity of the soul; the soul remains for itself, a spirit. When God made man to be His own, His dwelling, He who is a Spirit, reserved the soul, to teach, admonish, comfort and chastise the same through His Living Word, Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit. But to the understanding, reason and thought of the external man, He gave the Holy Scriptures, the physical literal word and external ministry, that the same may be instructed in an external way in divine things and in the mysteries of salvation. From all this it is evident that the literal spoken physical word, also all external ministries, cannot reach the soul of man, but can only enter through the eyes and ears into the physical reason, thought and natural comprehension. It is not necessary, much less is it honorable, for God to bind up His power with the

physical words . . . God is able to reach into the inmost recesses of the soul through His Living Word, Jesus Christ . . . External things are perishable and cannot penetrate the soul, neither can they be media of grace in our conversion. That which shall touch the soul must be eternal. It is true, the Holy Scriptures, enlightened teachers and books direct man to God as the only one who converts the heart, but they themselves cannot give it or bring it about."

To Bishop Spangenberg's arguments that the external word and voice reach the soul, Weiss replied saying: "This, my honest friend, you cannot substantiate by a single Scriptural citation, and to be frank with you, all your Scripture quotations prove absolutely nothing in this question, because they all have to be stretched and cannot maintain their correct meaning according to the spiritual thought. It pains me to see that you, as is the habit of all parties, interpret Scripture, when it speaks of the living Word, on the basis of the written or literal word . . . Gloss it over with as fine words as you will, it does not and cannot stand before God. It is a snare of Satan, to catch men in a new way, for if one can only persuade oneself that with one's spoken, literal or written word one can penetrate the soul, even though one gloss it over saying that God does it, one can adorn oneself so perfectly with the thought that one is working together with God in that which He, however, has reserved for Himself alone, namely, to convert men, to win souls. It is a great glory for the old Adam to be somewhat like God. To you it may not appear so horrible, but I am confident that not only many hundreds, but many thousands, yea millions of men in these times, in Europe as well as here in Pennsylvania, are being sadly misled in this way . . . You say that if it only concern the external man, then so many excellent writings, long speeches, beautiful, heartfelt prayers and words fraught with emotion are not necessary. Ah! my friend, remember that the external man is also to be a partaker of divine glory and brightness, a fellow-heir of the kingdom of heaven and eternal life, hence he must also be instructed . . . reminded and

directed by study, meditation, admonition to that which he is to enjoy throughout eternity. Of the Scripture citations, I want to mention one or two examples, to show how one must have spiritual discernment therein, as firstly, John 6:63, The words which I speak to you are spirit and are life. Ah! my friend! Who was he that said: I. Was it not God and man? Yes! Hence He spoke through the mouth of His holy humanity, sound and echo, which only reached into the ears and thought of the hearers. But according to His divine nature He spoke power, spirit and life, which reached the hearts that were prepared by grace. Therefore, He said before that: It is the Spirit, that is, the divine nature, that quickeneth; the flesh availeth nothing. How could He have said: The flesh availeth nothing, if the words of the flesh had been spirit and life, John 17:20. I pray also for those who through their Word believe on me. Ah! cherished friend, remember first of all, that it does not say: Their words, but their Word, and such is the reading also in Greek. And now notice secondly, what their Word was, whether it was their word of preaching. Certainly not, but their Word was nothing other than the living and quickening Word of God which dwelt in their heart, and through such indwelling, became their Word, that is, the Word of the Apostles. Those, who believe through this living Word of God, through which also the Apostles had been made believers, for those the Lord prayed. Consider it well. I Thessalonians 2:13, we do not read: The word of divine preaching but the Word of the hearing of God. Consider here what the hearing of God is, and what word is heard with such hearing. And discriminate between the preaching of this word which the Thessalonians through the ministry of Paul received into their external ears and understanding, and the true speaking of the living Word which through or under Paul's ministry came from God into their hearts, then the citation will soon be clearer and easier."

In another letter to the Moravian Bishop, Weiss candidly reminded him how submissive he had appeared to be when first he attended Schwenckfelder meetings; how very docile he was, telling

them that his purpose was, in the name of love to keep harmony. But, Weiss says, he knew that in reality this was not so. He knew that the question about the Word of God and the ministry was the chief point of controversy. He risked sending Spangenberg a letter and received a counter-reply. Then he sent another letter, including a document about the apostolic ministry. Thereupon Spangenberg gave Weiss five questions which the latter answered, but received no reply, as he received no further replies to any notes or questions which he sent him.

George Weiss propounded 84 questions necessary for consideration which have been preserved. They bear no date, but very obviously belong to the period of his great struggle to maintain the liberty of the Schwenckfelders against the Moravian representatives of Count Zinzendorf, 1736-1739, who were intent on drawing the Schwenckfelders into their faith for the purpose of acquiring great economic assets for their colony. These 84 questions reveal the nature of the topics under discussion by the two parties and the extent of the thought and study devoted by Weiss to his work of keeping his flock intact. For example:

Did not Paul before his conversion,

when he was still an unbeliever, read the finest admonitions and penalties of the law? And did he not, while then zealous toward God, reflect much on the same?

How much did it profit him in his conversion, can it not be shown out of his epistles that it hindered more than helped him in his conversion?

If Schwenckfeld out of his assurance of faith and of spiritual insight wrote about the Lord Jesus Christ and his kingdom, is it wrong to accept his writings, in addition to Holy Writ, as a positive testimony?

Is it wrong to read such testimony, as a first lesson or study, being easier to grasp and to understand than the Scripture?

Can there be any danger whatsoever in so doing, in view of the fact that such testimony points to the same end as does the Scripture?

George Weiss, stoutly, diligently, untiringly and successfully defended his Schwenckfelder flock and doctrines against these latest representatives of European persecution and commercialism. They finally retreated beyond the sea, having been routed by the scholarly pen and powerful theological arguments of the meekest man in Pennsylvania, George Weiss.

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BALTHASAR HOFFMANN (1687-1775)

Scholar, Minister, Writer, Diplomat

By ELMER S. GERHARD

Birth and Parentage

Of the early life of our subject we have but few details; even the sketch written by his son, Christopher Hoffmann, does not enlighten us much regarding this period of his father's life. Presumably it was in the main uneventful and undramatic. We know for a certainty, however, that he was born in 1687, in Harpersdorf, in the Principality of Liegnitz, in Silesia, Austria. We have it from his own testimony that his parents were poor, but worthy, lowly, and unpretentious. He early learned the weaver's trade, and was employed as a weaver in Harpersdorf, especially in winter. He did more or less spinning and weaving all his life. In summer he very frequently served as a day-laborer. Such diligence, industry, thrift and capacity for hard labor were characteristic attributes of Schwenckfelders who later settled in Pennsylvania. Their fine farms scattered over the southeastern counties of the state bear testimony to this fact. Balthasar Hoffmann was tall of stature, but lean of person. His face was rather long. His hair grew entirely white soon after he was fifty years old. Though it cannot be said that he had, in general, robust health or a strong constitution, he did after all reach a grand old age of more than four score years.

His father, Christopher Hoffmann, Sr., never came to this country; he died in Saxony in 1735, aged eighty-four years. He must have been a man of considerable power and influence as he was one of the three men sent to Vienna to appear before the Imperial Government to plead for tolerance. But his wife, Ursula Anders Hoffmann, came to Pennsylvania with her two sons, George and Balthasar, the latter the subject of our sketch. She became ill after the vessel had left Altona; she endured the voyage, but five days after landing, September 27, 1734, she died in Philadelphia, where she is

very likely buried.¹ Both sons were married by this time and had families of their own.

His Studious Inclinations

From his earliest youth, Balthasar Hoffmann showed an uncompromising inclination and an insatiable desire to acquire knowledge and to ascertain the truth. Already at an early age he manifested an ardent eagerness and zeal to study the ancient languages. By ceaseless diligence, by dint of assiduous labor and by the aid of good books, he soon acquired a reading knowledge of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew. This feat is the more remarkable because in his day books were by no means the luxury they frequently are today, and in addition to the limited supply of books, he did not have the means to procure such as were available for his purpose.

His knowledge of the ancient languages afforded him great facilities for studying and searching the Sacred Scriptures; and study and search them he surely did; and few ever did more so. He had an inherent desire to devote himself to the Scriptures so as to acquire a correct understanding of them. Hence his ability to use these languages served him most valuably in examining the Scriptures in the original text, for that is where the real meaning and flavor is to be found.

He was also no less zealous in his pursuit of Christian theology and Christian doctrine, especially such as were propounded by Caspar Schwenckfeld. To steep himself in such learning, it is said that he already at the early age of eleven years transcribed, among others,

¹ "The Diary of the Voyage" (*Reisebeschreibung*) makes mention of her that on May 28th she was sick unto death in Altona in a house provided for them by the Van der SmisSENS. Balthasar Hoffmann's oldest daughter, Anna, was with her. (*Vide*, "Erläuterung," p. 452, 1771 ed.)

the writings of Michael Hiller and of Martin John, Jr. This statement may seem doubtful, but we have found no means to refute it. Balthasar Hoffmann was, like many other learned men of his time, a self-made and self-educated man; that is, as far as these terms are applicable.

The Jesuit Mission

Up to this time Balthasar Hoffmann's life seems to have kept on the even tenor of its way. These early years were years of preparation for greater things yet to come. And that eventful occasion came by 1718; for by this time the Jesuit persecution of the Schwenckfelders began to loom up large and menacing and seemed to threaten their life and very existence as a religious body.

After the Lutherans had failed for two hundred years to win them over into their fold they tried to arouse the Imperial Government at Vienna in their favor. They pointed out to the officials in Liegnitz that if they were given support the conversion of these people would be an easy matter. But the Lutherans were thumping at the gates of Vienna a little too long and a little too often for help. The Emperor, Charles VI, concluded that if these people could be won over as easily as predicted he would force them to embrace the Catholic faith by sending missionaries among them. It was not difficult to convince the Emperor that the Schwenckfelders were not protected by the Peace Treaty of Westphalia of 1648 which closed the Thirty Years' War; it regarded them rather as outlaws. So they were outside of the pale of the law, both civil and religious.

The first official act of the Imperial Government was to direct the officials at Liegnitz to send in an official report of these people and an account of their faith. Some of the leaders were summoned to appear before the authorities at Liegnitz on May 19, 1718. The written declaration of their faith was submitted on May 25 of the same year.² The second hearing took place on October 24th, also of the same year.

A year later organized effort and plans were taking shape. By the royal decree of September 16, 1719, two Jesuit priests were appointed as missionaries to the Schwenckfelders. These men were the

agents of the Imperial Government to whom were entrusted one of two alternatives: to convert these people to the Catholic faith, or to blot them out of existence as a religious body. The further and detailed account of the persecutions inflicted upon the Schwenckfelders by these Jesuits is another story which is not germane to our theme.

Delegate to Vienna

Two years later, May, 1721, the outrageous insults, fines and imprisonments became so unbearable that the Schwenckfelders sent a delegation consisting of three men: Balthasar Hoffmann and his father Christopher, and Balthasar Hoffrichter, to Vienna to plead for tolerance. The latter soon returned, but Balthasar Hoffmann and his father stayed almost five years at the Court of Vienna. Both father and son must have been men of influence. Balthasar was at this very time not yet thirty-five years old. It was no small undertaking "to beard the lion in his den." These men knew nothing of court procedure and court intrigue. Fortunately, however, friends were found, and also even court officials, who at the risk of losing their positions, helped them to place their pleas before the Court of his Majesty, Charles VI.³

² This declaration was subscribed to by Balthasar Dietrich, Christopher Seibt, David Seibt, Hans Jäckel, George Jäckel, George Anders, George Weiss, Caspar Hoffmann, Balthasar Hoffmann, and his father, Christopher Hoffmann. In 1772, friends in Silesia printed copies of this Confession of faith in altered form and sent 200 copies to the Schwenckfelders in Pennsylvania as a token of gratitude for the help the Schwenckfelders gave them during a season of famine sometime previous. But Balthasar Hoffmann, who was by this time the only survivor of the signers of the original document, remarked: "In this form it was not submitted to the government." The people here were very much displeased with this garbled production; their first impulse was to destroy the whole shipment. No specimen of the original Confession is extant in this country. A copy of what appears to have been the original is printed in Kadelbach's "Ausführliche Geschichte der Schwenckfelder," Lauban, 1860. A copy of the garbled issue of 1772 is in the Schwenckfelder Historical Library, Pennsburg, Pa.

³ Balthasar Hoffmann, "Kurtzer und Gründlicher Bericht von den Schwenckfeldern, wie es um sie gestanden und zugegangen in Schlesien zur Zeit der Mission, etc."

During the five years that Balthasar Hoffmann and his father were at the Court they presented to the Emperor, partly in writing and partly by prostrating themselves before him, no less than seventeen memorials. These memorials might be exceedingly interesting if they could be found. They have never been found, and very likely never will be. If they were stored away and are extant anywhere they might be in the Archives of Vienna, Austria. This would be the logical place to find them, if they still exist. We know little or nothing of all that took place at the Court during these years.

Thousands of dollars were spent to maintain this deputation at the Court—but all in vain. Melchior Schultz said that 19,000 rix-dollars were spent.⁴ But what was the value of a rix-dollar of those days in the terms of United States money of today? Anyway, it was a staggering amount. How could these distressed people, whom the ravages of war and the galling, burdensome fines of the Jesuits had impoverished, supply such funds?

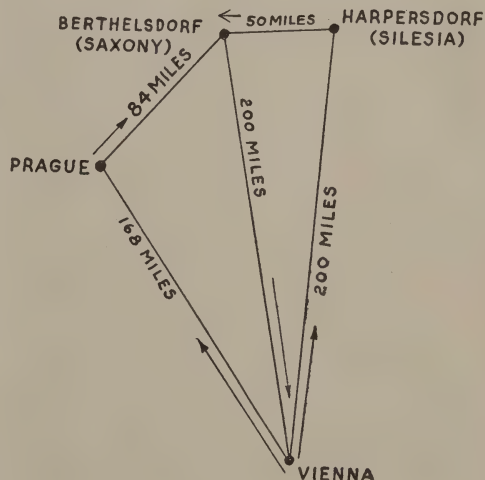
Balthasar Hoffmann, speaking of the great danger to which he and his aged father, as Schwenckfelder deputies to the Court in Vienna, were exposed, says: "It was the sole design of the Mission to have us caught, but it is noteworthy that in this they were thwarted by the Court. It so happened that we learned of this plot and therefore changed our lodging-place, our ways of going about the city, and other circumstances, very frequently. I was warned that life-imprisonment threatened me, as the chief spokesman, if I were ever caught. A price was set on my head even after I was no longer in Vienna. While the size of the city and its many people offered some physical protection, nevertheless God was our shield and buckler. His purpose was directed to a different end."⁵ The last petition for mercy was handed in on July 28, 1725. By September of the same year the Imperial Government issued a decree that the missionaries had to make better progress in converting the Schwenckfelders, and that no more petitions were to be presented. So Balthasar Hoffmann and his father, fearing treachery, fled from the Court. A reward was

offered for taking Balthasar prisoner. After this ultimatum he did not dare to show himself by day. Money was offered for catching him even after he had left Vienna.⁶

Flight from Vienna

Since the authorities toward the last were lying in wait to trap him, he went back to Silesia, but he did not dare let himself be seen openly, and as there was also no abiding place here, he fled with his family—mother, wife and two daughters—by night, in 1726, to Saxony. Then he went stealthily straight down from Saxony to Vienna to fetch his aged father, Christopher Hoffmann, Sr., a white-bearded old man of seventy-five years, and brought him secretly and safely to Saxony by way of Prague.⁷

This was a tedious, daring, and venturesome undertaking. With his aged father, with a lot of personal effects, among them some cumbersome books, as will be seen later, and with a price on his own head, Balthasar Hoffmann swung almost twice around the three sides of that huge triangle. According to our



method of reckoning mileage he traveled no less than nine hundred miles, taking

⁴ *Vide*, H. W. Kriebel: "The Schwenckfelders in Pennsylvania," 1904; p. 23.

⁵ *Vide*, Footnote (3) p. 36.

⁶ "Erläuterung," p. 62.

⁷ Christopher Hoffmann's sketch of his father.

into account his original trip to Vienna in 1721. In addition to the distance covered, think of the means and facilities of traveling then available. For eight years he and his family and other refugees remained in Saxony under the protection of Count von Zinzendorf.⁸ The missionaries, vexed that their prey had escaped, tried to have an Imperial mandate passed to compel these refugees to return to Silesia. Thus was Zinzendorf forbidden to afford them shelter any longer. They had to move out of his earldom within a year. So Balthasar Hoffmann and his family and aged mother, who died soon after her arrival in Philadelphia, left for Pennsylvania, April, 1734. We cannot even imagine the feelings under which Balthasar and his family and his brother George and his family and their mother left the old father, now eighty-three years old, and all alone; convinced assuredly must they have been that they would never see each other again. He died the next year, 1735. But then, this was only one of the many such heart-breaking scenes of those days.

It must be said to the credit and praise of the Jesuit missionaries that though many families were disrupted and scattered and the children forced into the Catholic Church, Balthasar Hoffmann's family was never molested. During the time he was in Vienna many acts of violence were perpetrated in Silesia, but the members of his family, whom he had left behind, were safely sheltered; no such violence and misfortune fell to their lot.

Arrival in Pennsylvania

Balthasar Hoffmann and his family did not tarry very long in Philadelphia. He soon left for the country and established a home in the vicinity of the Salford meeting-house, several miles northwest of Lansdale. Here he and his only brother, George, bought a tract of land, but joint tenancy was soon severed. It was about this time that Melchior Kriebel wrote to friends in Herrnhut that Balthasar Hoffmann had bought an "improved plantation" twenty-six miles from Philadelphia. For eight weeks he in company with several other men

helped the Schultz brothers—George, Melchior, and Christopher⁹—build their house in Goshenhoppen, in the extreme northern part of Montgomery County, then Philadelphia County. This was the first two-story house between Skippack and the Blue Mountains. Balthasar served as apprentice; on Sundays he conducted divine service at which his employer and foreman were present—and much to their wonderment.

During all this time he continued his diligent reading of the Bible and his study of Christian doctrine. He served as a Christian teacher to all who were around him. When George Weiss, the first Schwenckfelder minister in America, died in 1740, Balthasar Hoffmann was chosen to officiate in his stead. But not being very strong constitutionally, he withdrew several times. There was also discord and dissension. All in all, he became discouraged and resigned in May, 1741. He was appealed to, and so he reconsidered his resignation; but he resigned again at the end of the Church Year, 1744, but was again persuaded to resume charge. These several resignations were due to lack of harmony between him and the Schwenckfelders in regard to doctrine, conduct in daily life and their meetings. By 1749 he had developed a chest affliction which made speaking and singing well-nigh impossible. So he now resigned for the third and last time.

But still demands were made upon him, especially as a catechist and instructor of the young. Thus he labored diligently until the weight of years made it impossible for him to serve any longer. He never tired in his duties. His Sabbath forenoons, afternoons, and evenings he spent in reading, writing, and singing; and he could do all three with perfection. Many of his letters, hymns, sermons, and treatises on the Scriptures and on Christian doctrine are still extant.

⁸ His only son, Christopher, was born here, 1727.

⁹ These three orphan boys struck out from Philadelphia through the wilderness to a place with a fine spring several miles west from the village of East Greenville, Montgomery County. The house they built was a noted landmark for several generations.

On March 28, 1774, George Kriebel, Jr., wrote to friends in Silesia:

"Balthasar Hoffmann has been quite ill, but is better although aged and weak. He occupies a little room in the house of his son, Christopher; spins a little; can read without glasses, if he holds the book up close."

On December 21, 1774, he was attacked with vertigo, which affliction left him very weak. There were repeated attacks every few weeks; and each attack always left him weaker. The end finally came on July 11, 1775, in his eighty-ninth year. He was busy until the very last night in mental and manual labor. He passed his last days in the little room, already mentioned, spinning, reading, singing. His spiritual influence is still flowing on in the educational, charitable, missionary, and literary endeavors of his people. It has been said that he "worked faithfully, lived nobly, and died magnanimously."

Extremely Modest

Balthasar Hoffmann was a man of great modesty, unassuming and sincere; he shunned notoriety and publicity, because to him they showed a vainglorious spirit. This note of modesty runs through many of his writings. The one word which crops out most frequently is the word "einfältig." To him it meant *simplicity, innocence, modesty, unobtrusiveness and humility*. That he was modest and humble is made clear from the following note—"To be considered and observed on my burial day":

"II Corinthians 12:9. My strength is mighty in the weak, or as it really reads, is made complete, is made perfect in weakness. Brief reference may be made regarding what the cause and circumstances of this (verse) were on the part of Paul. But it is to be applied to the work of God among men. If one applies the word weakness to man's corrupt nature, which sense it can have according to theology, the same must be recognized and deplored that man is worth so little to God in the carrying out of His plans. What the strength of God is should be considered. Cf. The Book "Messiah," p. 196.¹⁰ Likewise what the aim and end of strength is in that which is made perfect. At the conclusion of the meditation there may be sung the following hymn from the hymnbook, page 196:

"Sei ein Bereiter mein,
Dir zu ehren, zu führen das Leben
mein.

Vollend, O mein Herre
An mir dein'n Rath und Willen
Den auch zu erfüllen
Wollst du mich befestigen
Mit Gnad bekräftigen
Ewig bestettigen."

"I want to say also in this connection that in this meditation I do not wish to have special reference made to me, who I was, what I did, etc. This is totally contrary to my will. I desire also that with regard to my lifeless body the utmost plainness and simplicity in all things be observed in accordance with the old plainness of European origin still held in remembrance. If after the burial a meal is served according to custom, the following hymn of thanks may be sung at its conclusion:

"Ach! dasz ich durch ernstlich Gebät,
Vergebung aller Sünden hätt;
Auch die last meines fleisches alt,
Ablegete gantz und gar alsbald."

"Balthasar Hoffmann"

Profoundly Pious and Devout

He was no less pious and devout than he was modest and humble. He, as well as George Weiss, may have been somewhat precise and scrupulous in observance of religious duties, in the manner of living and in his attitude toward the changing times. These men could not understand that with the beginning of the 18th century a *novus ordo seclorum*¹¹ began here in America. Balthasar Hoffmann looked askance at the new styles, customs and manners; he did not realize that:

"Time makes ancient good uncouth." He feared he saw the time coming when the zeal for the doctrines and the teachings of the forefathers would have to give way to worldly interests. Did he fear amiss?

This austere attitude and exactness and rigidity in religious matters may have had much of its origin in Moravian methods of discipline in the old country, where people were closer together. There distance did not mean what it meant in America; and because they were closer together they could be held to stricter customs in personal garb, conduct and other things. But here in America things would not work out that way. They were

¹⁰ Adam Reissner, "Messiah," Frankfurt-on-the-Main, 1566. It is a scholarly piece of work beautifully executed with a quill. It takes note of every reference, even the slightest, to the Messiah in the Scriptures.

¹¹ "A new order of the ages."

widely scattered. They could not purchase a large tract of land to form a community all by themselves, as originally planned. They made repeated efforts to purchase large tracts of contiguous land so that they might be close together, but no suitable locality could be found. This was the plan which both Weiss and Hoffmann were trying to follow—but in vain. Surveys were made of tracts all the way from Lower Salford to Perkasio, to Chalfont, and then on to Falckner Swamp. Not being able to establish a distinct Schwenckfelder community, they all went their several ways and bought land wherever conditions were found favorable.

Consequently, people got out from under such restraint, piety and devoutness. Furthermore, these people had to make a desperate effort to gain a foot-hold in the American wilderness. We of today do not understand, know or appreciate, and never will, the privations, the agonizing sufferings, mental and physical, endured by the early emigrants to this country; nor those endured by the pioneers who pushed the course of empire across rivers, desserts, and mountains to the Indian's land of the setting sun. These people spent the whole week in an endeavor to make a living. Balthasar Hoffmann himself wrote: "When they landed there was great disorder respecting homes and means of winning a livelihood. The people lost concern for the faith for which they had suffered and lapsed into lukewarmness. The whole week was spent in struggling for a living. Sunday meant laziness, inactivity, and a light-hearted state of mind." They were widely scattered; traveling on foot or on horseback over wilderness roads was a hardship. The exigencies of the situation, the pressure of their daily tasks in order to procure the necessities of life simply forbade these people to devote as much time to daily devotions as their ministers thought they should.

Under such circumstances a pastor's duties are necessarily arduous. Balthasar Hoffmann catechised the children, saw to the time and place of worship, consecrated infants, kept a record of births and deaths, officiated at funerals, and stressed the importance of observing Memorial Day appropriately. And all

the while he traveled the vast expanse between Franconia and Macungie on horseback. Finally he secured a horse and buggy so as to cover his circuits in more comfort.

Balthasar Hoffmann and Zinzendorf

It is necessary at this point to retrace our steps for a little while in order to take note of the episode between the Schwenckfelders and Ludwig, Count von Zinzendorf, the Moravian Bishop, which has never been fully brought to light. It is to the credit of the Schwenckfelders that they did not make much ado over the matter. They suffered the indignities and insults which "His Lordship" heaped upon them in order not to incur the displeasure of the Moravians whose neighbors they became. They have always lived on the most friendly and amiable terms with one another. May they continue to do so.

Nor should it be forgotten that when they were driven out of Silesia in 1726, the Count gave them shelter for eight years. The Jesuits, provoked because they could not win these people over to their faith, were now doubly incensed at the Count for affording them protection. By April 4, 1733, an Imperial edict was issued, and notice was served on them that they had to move within a year. There was no available site in the old country; so they turned their attention to America, especially to Pennsylvania. The Count was in like manner alarmed and looked in the same direction for an abiding place for his own people. He had his eye on Georgia, planned as a home for the oppressed of all kinds. All through the year 1733 the Schwenckfelders were at a loss whither to migrate. So they drafted the following note to the Count:

"High and Noble-born Count of the
Realm, Gracious Lord,

"Having obtained information about a province in America, called St. Georgen, we might be inclined to migrate thither and set foot on said land; in which case we beseech Your Excellency, on our behalf, for information, and negotiations respecting transportation, nature of soil, etc.

"Melchior Kriebel

"George Weiss

"Balthasar Hoffmann

"Balthasar Jäckel

"and Sundry others"

Hereupon he proposed that they and the Moravians migrate to Georgia in a body. The Schwenckfelders consented, provided he could arrange with King George I of England that they be given liberty of conscience, free worship, free land, and free transportation, for they were really too poor to pay their own expenses. But as he could not meet these conditions, they sailed for Pennsylvania; they thought they were free from the Count—but not yet. August Gottlieb Spangenberg, the Count's delegate, had expected to accompany the Schwenckfelders but when he found out that they were going to Pennsylvania and not to Georgia, he took a company of Moravian immigrants alone to Savannah, Georgia. The Count, feeling disgusted with the Schwenckfelders, sent Spangenberg after them. In April, 1736, he arrived at Christopher Wiegner's place, Towamencin, and made it his lodging-place until his recall to Europe in 1739. He tried to fraternize with the Schwenckfelders and attended their meetings in order to get into their good graces until George Weiss requested him to let them alone.

Spangenberg was recalled to Europe in 1739. In the fall of 1741 Zinzendorf himself arrived in New York. He was in Philadelphia by November 24th, and ten days later he was also at Wiegner's place, in Towamencin. He preached there, but with scant satisfaction; he called conferences in Germantown, but the Schwenckfelders paid virtually no attention to them. The scant recognition of his preaching, the ignoring of his conferences, the displeasure aroused by their going to Pennsylvania, their non-responsiveness to the labors of Spangenberg, and the cunning sycophancy of his other representatives put the Count into a frame of mind which soon disclosed his real temper.

On the day of Epiphany, January 6, 1742, eight Schwenckfelders met Zinzendorf at his house in Germantown. He assailed them violently and threatened to follow them whithersoever they might go and to execute his pretended written power over them, to which power he alleged they had subscribed, and to take away their children unless they became converted. The Schwenckfelders replied politely and courteously that they hoped

this would not happen, and that they had no knowledge of having at any time subscribed themselves in submission to him. They challenged him to show that they had done so. Several more conferences were called but they sent no deputies.

The Count's ire rose higher and higher with each succeeding conference. Eventually he drafted a letter dated Germantown, March 20, 1742, in which he said in part that he would fix a time of three months for their false teachers, unconverted overseers and blind leaders; if within that time someone who knew the cross of Jesus would take them in charge, convert some of them, introduce the Sacraments, and make them capable of the name of a church, then he would let them stand in the Lord, for they would then be a regular denomination. If none of these things should come to pass or be attended to he would concern himself to remove the hirelings from them . . . to tear the sheep out of their mouths, etc. . . . and whithersoever they might go he would pursue their captive souls everywhere as long as he lived, and follow them and search them and finally obtain them for the Savior by weeping and praying. He reminds them that the time expires April 6th, when they are again invited to a conference. At the expiration of the time fixed he will in Christ's name proceed honestly and manfully to work. "It was an empty threat that these people should fear and at once prostrate themselves, for they did not come and paid no attention to his dictatorial counsel, but remained quietly away from him and since that time he could not undertake anything further against them."

The person to answer this letter was none other than Balthasar Hoffmann:

"Honored Friend:

"If, as appears, your notice in reference to the proposed conference and the invitation thereto is also intended for us, we thank you for the same. But in considering the object in view regarding us we think it will not be attained, for we shall not part with the knowledge and convictions we possess, nor let anything go thereof. Consequently we cannot see any benefit by attending the conference. This will explain then that we will not appear there. In reference to the accusations lately brought against us we do not concern ourselves. The

truth of the matter can be ascertained by following the information to its source. Whatever may be determined against us we commend the matter to the Triune God, as well as ourselves, and shall await the outcome in the hope that God will be with us and grant us patience, charity, understanding and strength. As for the rest, it is our thought and wish to allow each one to take his stand and to act as it seems best to him and grant him the benefit of such a course. In this manner we have wished to express ourselves; as for the rest, we feel inclined to remain your well-wisher and friend.

"Balthasar Hoffmann

"And Sundry other Friends."

Germantown, April 12, 1742

Zinzendorf replied again as follows:

"While I hereby charge publicly before the all-seeing eye of the Lord as well as before every honorable man that you have committed the spiritual and temporal care of your people to me in writing, even if you dwell outside of my domain and particularly outside of Europe and indeed in naming Pennsylvania. But I do not wish to lay the writing before you, because you treat me with sophistical artifices and I (the appointee of Jesus as Reformer of the Schwenckfelder religion) being obliged to proceed apostolically desire that you give me the following written obligation under your name that you will, until after your death take the charge upon yourselves. In that case this paper shall serve as a strong obligation on my part that I will set aside my services as a reformer of the Schwenckfelder religion . . . etc.

"Your late Brother, co-laborer and
and Curator respectively,
"Ludwig Zinzendorf"

(not dated)

The said release is found on the reverse side of the Count's letter. Here follows the answer to the foregoing letter:

"Out of respect for your person we have in sincerity replied to all demands heretofore made upon us, but as we find that our simple yet truthful declarations are construed as sophistry we are compelled hereafter absolutely to decline to notice each and every importunity that may yet be made, oral or written, until we are shown that written power of our submission. For it is not the accusation but the evidence that proves the case. The entrusted instruction from Christ against our religion we do not believe. We decline the demand; we have neither the bestowed nor the assumed power nor choice to treat with our people in the manner prescribed; it would appear neither proper nor formal, but rather foolish. By the help of God we shall remain with ours, thank Him for granting us liberty, place our trust in His providential care, and com-

mit ourselves with all that may impend to Him. We are not worrying about the length of time that entrusted reformation is to be suspended. We merely wish to make it known that we cannot assume, much less assent to what we are charged with. We fail to see why such a binding instrument (as is alleged) was not shown us ere this. As we have openly and honestly made known our intentions and have nothing more to do with the affair and commenced our journey publicly. These are our resolutions and principles.

"Balthasar Hoffmann

"Melchior Kriebel, Sr.

"David Seibt

"Christoph Huebner

"Caspar Kriebel

"And sundry others of us."

(not dated)

This is a masterpiece of a letter; it quieted the hypocritical Zinzendorf, for by this time he must have realized that the "game was up." This was the last communication recorded. For the first time in sixteen years did the Schwenckfelders feel themselves free from their would-be "reformer."

His Scholarly Traits

Balthasar Hoffmann's scholarship is of the first order; it brooks no diminution in comparison with that displayed by anyone of his time; and few can match it today. This is the more remarkable when one notes under what distressing circumstances he labored when he did his finest and most scholarly work.

Among his many literary effects are numerous evidences that illustrate his scholarly attitude and aptitude. One of these is a note on the word "jauchzen"—to shout with joy. He takes this word, as found in seven of the Psalms, and lists Latin words and synonyms, and the same in Hebrew. He quotes the reading of Psalm 47 in the Septuagint (Greek), Low German, and Latin (the version of Jerome). He concludes that "jauchzen" is an Old Testament term used to express an outward manifestation of joy, but that it equally as often indicates an inner feeling of joy and satisfaction.

The comment on this simple word is worthy the distinction of a doctor's dissertation; it reveals the man's accurate scholarship. Considering whence the man came, how and where did he acquire such information and the ability to discuss

such matters with a nicety of distinction and discrimination in a half-dozen different languages? One needs to remember that he was born of poor, hard-working parents, that he was a weaver by trade; it is not known that he ever had any schooling in the old country, and surely none in this; that he helped the Schultz brothers build their house, as already related, and that on Sundays he preached the Gospel, much to the admiration and consternation of his hearers. Such an achievement is worthy of the highest admiration and ought to put to shame many of the young people of today who have every opportunity and the privilege to acquire a well-rounded education.

Another fine specimen of his scholarship is one of the letters by means of which he gave Christopher Schultz lessons in Hebrew. This is another masterpiece, both in mechanical execution and in scholarship. It is written in his usual clear, legible hand. He took a passage in Hebrew from the Old Testament, and then stated its equivalent in Greek and Latin with explanations in German. This material is arranged in columns with the synonyms and the root of each term used. These explanations and definitions are most detailed and explicit. These are only a few specimens of his profound learning and scholarship.¹²

His Correspondence

Aside from his many activities, manual, literary and ministerial, he conducted an extensive correspondence, mainly, however, in the old country, and especially so while he was a deputy at the Court in Vienna, 1721-1725, and was thus absent from his family in Silesia. The descriptive catalogue of his writings, compiled by his son Christopher, lists eighty-three letters; thirty-seven of these were written to his family in Silesia. One was written from Berthelsdorf; one went to his brother, two to his father, probably after Balthasar had left Vienna.

¹² The original MS. of this exercise is in the Schwenckfelder Historical Library, Pennsburg, Pa. (reproduced in Brecht, G. R., p. 892, plate 97). Correspondence schools are supposed to be of recent date, but Balthasar Hoffmann anticipated this method of instruction by one hundred and twenty years.

These letters are contained in one volume with this title page:

ETLICHE ZUSAMMENGETRAGENE LEHRHAFTEN
BRIEFE UND SCHRIFFTEN
So eine Person die gewisser Geschäfte halben
ferne verreisen müssen, den Seinen, in
deren betrübten Zustände, Ihnen zur Lehr
und Trost zugeschrieben
Sammt, einigen, dessen Authoris
Liedern und der Evangelisten und
Apostel Lehr und Lebens Beschreibung
zusammen getragen
von
A. H.¹³
Im Jahre Christi
MDCCXXVIII

We shall quote, *in toto*, one of these letters, in translation, to his family and to his mother. It discloses the man's sincere humility, his distrust of royalty, his weariness of the wrangling and chicanery of the Court, the vanity of earthly pleasure, his longing for retirement and the companionship of his loved ones, and his trust in God:

"Oh my beloved, how noble it is to be humble and how futile to be vainglorious. Oh happy the man who can live his life in simplicity, and knows nothing of royalty, even though he is despised. All human pleasure, all jollifications, all worldly festivities, all splendor, all elegance, all music of stringed instruments, in short everything in this world, that serves carnal pleasures brings joy of brief duration. Sooner or later one and then the other of all these things disturbs the soul and pricks the human conscience. I may speak from experience since I have personally examined into the matter and I observed so much in the experience of others that I am sick and tired of the world. I am longing to spend the rest of my life after this present season of unrest in quiet retirement. I know that this statement will make you sad, and yet it is true that a sincere soul cannot close itself against another. God will without doubt keep alive in my heart a spark of love enabling me to bear my lot.

"Balthasar Hoffmann, Vienna
"September 16, 1723"

"Written by him to his family and to Ursula Hoffmann at the time he was separated from them."¹⁴

There are various other letters to persons in this country. He and Christopher Schultz had considerable correspondence, especially during the time he gave

¹³ Anna Hoffmann, his daughter, at the age of sixteen years.

¹⁴ Balthasar Hoffmann's mother was named Ursula, as was also his wife.

Christopher Schultz lessons in Hebrew. An interesting letter has just lately been found which sheds light on an important item. In 1761, Balthasar Hoffmann wrote to Christopher Schultz regarding the necessity of a book giving the origin, history, and the doctrines of Caspar Schwenckfeld and the Schwenckfelders. He called it "*Praescriptio quae sint gerenda.*" Schultz is, of course, the author of the "*Erläuterung.*" But this communication shows that the original idea came from Hoffmann. Schultz sent the letter back to Hoffmann saying that he, Hoffmann, was the man to do this, that he himself was not equal to the task. Hoffmann sent the note back to Schultz with the result that within ten years the book had been written and was in print (1771).

In 1762 Balthasar Hoffmann wrote the following letter of fatherly advice to his granddaughter, Susanna Seipt:

"I, as your grandfather, admonish and remind you and beg of you out of fatherly kindness that you endeavor to direct yourself in your attitude to be inconspicuous and lowly before God and man, and to remain so. Remain also humble and be plain in dress and behavior. Do not pride yourself because of things temporal. Ask God for grace and support that He direct you and not indulge you and amuse you with much of temporal possessions, with earthly, perishable transitory things. Do not seek to increase the same with eagerness.

"Be submissive to your husband, obedient and subject to him; realize what is coming from him to you. Strive for peace and harmony. If anything turns up at any time which is displeasing to you, if you cannot change it peaceably, compose yourself in patience, with behavior and resignation. See to it that with it all you keep your heart clear and unspotted. Learn to recognize and observe how God loves to have you as one of His creatures; also that He is anxious about your salvation. It is exceedingly discouraging and displeasing to God if He cannot share His love and eternal salvation with His people, but has to repel them according to justice. Endeavor, with the support of His grace, to become possessed of Him, then all things will work together for your good (Romans 8:28)."

He also sent a long, appealing prayer to this granddaughter. It has the following preface:

"A true Christian and child of God must guard his thoughts in Christian discipline; not say or do anything without the fear of God, like a well-disciplined child that first

regards its father whenever it wishes to ask for something."

To this prayer he appended the following note:

"Now, my dear Susie, I do hope you will meditate over this prayer many times. But I do also know that in doing so you will find yourself unequal, and then all at once more able than the other time. Even if this is the case do not put the prayer aside entirely. I do not know where I found it or who wrote it. I copied it in 1745. And now I wish to give it to you as a remembrance of me." (1762).

It was only natural that the early Schwenckfelder settlers should conduct a fairly extensive correspondence with the friends they left behind in Europe, and in fact no less so with friends in the sparsely settled parts of Pennsylvania. There was much correspondence between the folks of the Upper District and the Lower District. Much of it was of the nature of instruction and for information. There are numerous letters which passed between Balthasar Hoffmann and Christopher Schultz while they were conducting studies on the Scriptures (1740-1748); and between the former and George Weiss on Biblical studies and questions. It was not unusual to write such letters in Latin.

As Hymnologist

Balthasar Hoffmann was also one of the most distinguished and one of the most copious hymn-writers of his day. He spent much time in composing, transcribing and studying hymns. On "*Gedächtniss Tag,*" i. e., on Memorial Day, he occasionally would present the study of a favorite hymn. Or he would compose one for the occasion as he did in 1744. His analyses, or meditations, of many hymns have been preserved. His son, Christopher Hoffmann, made a selection of seventeen of such studies. The close homiletic application, the intensity of method, and the wealth of meditation are really amazing.

In 1726, George Weiss revised his father's collection of hymns of 1709. An addition of three series of hymns was made at this time to the original collection of 1709. One of these series was the "*Epistel-lieder,*" so-called, by Balthasar Hoffmann; there were one hundred and

nine of them. This series is a metrical version of the Epistle Lessons, completed for the church year. This series was modeled after the "Evangelia-lieder" of George Weiss. Balthasar Hoffmann was familiar with the origin of the 1709 collection and made a transcript as soon as it was completed. He made a similar transcript of the second collection of hymns.

The 1726 collection, consisting of 1559 hymns, was completed just at the departure of the Schwenckfelders from Saxony, and in manuscript form reached America in 1734. When Balthasar Hoffmann succeeded George Weiss in the ministry in 1740, in which year Weiss died, he found the said collection badly arranged doctrinally; so he set about to recompile it. By 1753 he was finished with the transcription of the Weiss collection of 1726. He had also enriched it with interpretations and references to the Scriptures. This was a favorite study and method of his.

In the Saur edition of 1762, the first Schwenckfelder hymn-book printed in America, are listed fourteen Schwenckfelder hymn-writers; among them is Balthasar Hoffmann with thirty-eight hymns to his credit; he stands second to Daniel Sudermann with forty-seven hymns. When the Saur edition of 1762 was published Balthasar Hoffmann knew more of the various compilations than any other Schwenckfelder of his time. During his ministry, 1740-63, the hymn-book of the Bohemian Brethren passed out of use, and a new one by and for the Schwenckfelders was issued. Of the thirty-eight hymns he contributed to the Saur edition of 1762 he wrote twelve while the book was going through the press.

Literary Achievements

Balthasar Hoffmann was one of the most prolific of Schwenckfelder writers. His son Christopher Hoffmann made a descriptive catalogue of his father's writings in 1776. It lists fifty-eight tracts and eighty-three letters. It does not include his hymns, his historical sketches, nor a few minor nondescript productions. From this catalogue one can see that his most productive literary period extended

from 1722 to 1773. His writings fall roughly into three categories:

I. *Studies of the Bible*, either by verses or chapters, and occasionally entire books of the Bible, and explanations of Scripture passages in the Old and in the New Testaments. A fine specimen is his:

HEXATOMUS¹⁵
Das ist
Schlecht und Einfältige Betrachtung
der Epistel an die Hebreer
und
Zur nützlicher übung kurz Vorstellte
Erwegungen
Der darin enthaltenen Hohen Wurde
und Vortrefflichkeit des Hohen priesterthums
Unserers Wahrhaftigen und
Höchst nothwendigen Hohen Priester
Jesu Christi
der Sohn Gottes
Durchgangen und aufgeschrieben
von
Barachiah Heber
MDCCXXV

This is an octavo volume of 554 pages, executed in his usual legible handwriting. It is substantially bound in leather. He wrote it while he was in Vienna. The book is a treatise on the Epistle to the Hebrews. The work is preceded by a long preface in which he states that he means to discuss the authorship of this Epistle to the Hebrews. The authorship of this book of the Bible has always been a mooted question, and very likely will ever remain so.

The finest specimen of his pen, as well as of his scholarship, is his:

EPISTASIA
Das ist
Kurze Anmerkung
über
Die geordnete Hohe-fest-Son-und
feiertägliche Episteln
durchs gantze Jahr
Angemerkt und Aufgeschrieben
von
Einem gantz Schatzbahren
Libhaber Gottes
Seiner reinen Wahrheit
und
der heiligen Schrift
Barachiah Heber
Im Jahre Christi
MDCCXXIV
Itzund aber aufs Neue
Abgeschrieben im Jahre nach
Christi Geburt
MDCCXXVIII

¹⁵ "Hexatomus" is a Greek term meaning six items, sections, etc. In this case the writer means to treat his subject under six headings.

This is a folio of 1,422 pages, with 32 lines to the page. It is a superb piece of work and must be seen if one wishes to appreciate its full beauty. It is bound in pigskin over boards, with brass mountings and clasps. It is a big, heavy volume; it weighs 7½ pounds by actual weight. The book contains brief comments on the Epistles for Sundays and Holidays; it is really a *Postil*¹⁶ on the Epistle Lessons of the Church year. The long interesting preface to it is worth noting:

"It is customary to state in the preface of a book the object or purpose of it. *Preface* in Greek means to "forevaluate," and to give one's opinion of it. But a writer should also give preference to the opinion of others. However, no one can correctly evaluate a work without a knowledge of the writer's intent. Hence I desire to state my object in producing this work. (1) I cannot find out exactly who selected and arranged the Gospel and the Epistle texts for the Church Year; but it must have been done in the early period of the Christian era; for Telesphorus, the 9th Pope, toward the beginning of the second century had arranged the Gospels and the Epistles to be read. Whether his order, or arrangement, is the same which is followed today is not certain. We have found out, however, from a certain writer that someone by the name Alcuimus, or Albans, preceptor of Charles the Great, had in the 5th century arranged the Gospels and the Epistles as they are today. St. Augustine and St. Ambrosius and other Church Fathers and writers gave these assignments, or readings, the name *Postilla*. (2) The Jews read the Pentateuch (the Five Books of Moses) consecutively; there is a continuity of the narrative; but we in reading these assignments skip around and lose all connection. (3) Although our people had the *Postilla* of Weichenhan and of Hiller which they used in the conventicles, yet they hardly understood what it was all about. Even though there were previous written expositions of the Gospels, there were none on the Epistles. (4) Because it is still a custom among us today to read the Gospels and the Epistles on Sundays and on Holidays, probably for the most part not understood, I have for that reason written

¹⁶ "Postil" consists of two Latin words: *post*, after, and *illa* those (things, items). Originally it meant a note or comment on some passage of Scripture, written in the margin of a Bible; so called because it followed the text—it came *post* after the text. More recently it denotes a series of comments, especially on the Scriptures. The word "epistasia" itself is a Greek term: *epi* upon and *stasis* a standing or position; hence "the things which stand upon (the margin)."

these brief comments. I know people have other books to read, books in their chests and on their shelves. So I have made these notes very short, and also that the reader may divide and utilize his time for reading and not waste it in idle talk, etc."

He says that he wrote these comments in his solitude in Vienna in 1724, at a time when he could not discuss them with anyone, but based them on the perception he gained from comparisons of the Scriptures. He had virtually scant access to any reference books, or books of any kind. He was not to allow himself to be seen in public anywhere; consequently he could not make use of any libraries, even though they may have been within reach.

In 1726 he arranged the same texts in rhymes and composed prayers to accompany them. This book was copied in 1728 after the family had fled to Saxony. It is a beautiful piece of work; it is written in a fine, beautiful German script with a quill pen. The mechanical execution of the writing is a challenge to any penman.

His Reference Books

Of the reference books and lexicons Balthasar Hoffmann used in Vienna while writing the "Hexatomus," and the "Epistasia," and the "Hodophaenum," to be considered later, we know definitely of three: "Hebrew-Latin Lexicon," 1617, of 1,000 pages; "Latin-German Lexicon," 1638, of 1,000 pages; and "Biblia Sacra" (Vulgate), Vienna, 1718, 1,160 pages. They are all 8vo. in size. These books and the three tomes, just mentioned, he lugged all the way from Vienna to Silesia, thence to Saxony, and finally on the tedious voyage to America; and all the while there was a price on his head—surely an Herculean task!

Just very recently a little, seemingly insignificant paper, written in very fine German script was found lying unobtrusively in one of these lexicons, and this is what it says:

"Let it be known that when I was in Vienna I purchased a *Bibliam Sacram Vulgata Editionis*.

"We had not taken any books with us except the *Deutsch Passional* and a *Halle Testament*; but this secretly and insecurely. I did not have to hide this Bible even though I did not show it to anyone. As time

dragged on I planned a study of the Epistles aiming to prepare comments for my own benefit and required, therefore, the Greek text. Consequently, I purchased the New Testament in Greek and Latin, Sebastian Schmid interpr., and the Dictionarium, F. David Zuner (?), in Greek, Latin and German. Also I had an urgent desire for the Hebrew Bible a long time before the mission. In Vienna I found it, but it was very cumbersome and high in price, and, therefore, I postponed buying it; but when I found it in Prague in a more convenient size and at a cheaper price, I bought it. These books I do not regard as my own, except the Dictionarium. It so happened on one occasion that a letter from his mother for Gottlob Haubtmann, Furier (Quarter-Master) with the Beyreuth Regiment, was enclosed with our post; and as I delivered this letter to him in his billet, he gave me a gulden, and for this gulden I regard the Dictionarium as my own. The other three I regard as property of the congregation. And while under present circumstances no one in particular is the owner of these three books, although they are invaluable, I can do nothing else than to say that with me it is a great concern that the congregation should have the use of the same. Since the purchase of these books was in this wise and through an unexpected way, in which the original text of the entire Holy Scripture came into our hands, I consider it on the part of God, a method He had during this time of unrest. So far as my use is concerned, during the time I had them in my hands, I do not regard myself worthy, and far less do I consider having attempted to or obeyed the purpose of God in the same; nevertheless, I hope that in spite of all unworthiness and limited ability, I may have used a small part to my benefit and in support of our theological truth. It is my wish as God gives life and peace that after me they might be used toward furthering the truth which is a matter of very great concern to me."

B. H.

"Anno 1766, February 2, Balthasar Hoffmann delivered the above named three books into my hands after having declared that on account of infirmities of age he could no longer use them and loaned them to me for my use, and his thought he expressed as is given above. Furthermore, he encouraged me to purchase the Hebrew Dictionary and the Septuagint Greek Text, the Syriac Testament and Syriasum. It was his intention that all of these books might be kept together.

"Christoph Schultz"

His Postil

Another elaborate and extensive work belonging to this class is his "Evangelische Jahr Betrachtung." This is in fact a Postil, based on the Gospel Lessons for the Church year. It is really a series of

sermons preached during the course of years on the Gospel texts. The book is 8vo. in size and contains 832 pages, written in his own hand and finished in 1734; by 1744 he had prepared a series of questions as a guide for the study of the same. The preface, even though very long, is worthy of note because of its earnestness and directness.

"Everyone who makes use of this work and wishes to practice it later on is reminded that it is surely something which adapts itself very appropriately to instruction and meditation, for it is a complete classification of the texts of the Epistles. But still one should not want to take it up without some earnest intention and diligence but with a sigh in one's heart that God out of mercy may make it pleasant and agreeable to one. Whoever would put this outline into practice may want to know my idea. In the first place, the texts are to a large extent composed in the forms of supplications. It is also to be hoped that it will serve as a help to one, who is devout, to fill in the supplications with whatever may be wanting here, for then will the devotion of the one and the other not be idle.

"But still, there is a method with it all, so that one can grasp a thought in its entirety as to what the text has in itself and what was the thought and meaning of the Apostles at that time and among the people. This, then, can direct the devout person in his reading always to greater devotion. Yes, there is one help, whoever will let devotion and diligence prevail for him there will be more reflection and stimulation.

"One might divide the contents of the book and its arrangement as (1) Instruction, (2) Admonition, (3) Prayers. Considering the requests, the longing and the prayers it could have been presented in many more words and more persuasive terms; but it seems to me there would not have been more devotion aroused by doing so. . . . Even though the words "we" and "us" are used frequently, it is not to be intended for congregational or group use; no, not even for "pater-familias" with children and servants. Individual persons who have any devout feeling can use it, for without devotion it is an empty nothing. . . . It is wholly my purpose that it may be of service and help to someone . . . etc."

There are no less than seventeen items listed under this classification; many of them are books in manuscript form. The several items here described are the most important and the most noted.

II. *Studies and Treatises on Christian Doctrine, Sermons, Catechism, Christian Institutions, as that of Marriage, the Apostles' Creed, etc.* There are no less

than twenty-five items in this class. The finest and largest is:

HODOPHAENUM¹⁷
 Das ist
 Nützliche Handleitung
 oder
 Kürztliche Vorstellung
 Solcher Punkte
 Umb welche ein jeder Christ
 Sich notwendig besorchen soll
 Weil er auf dem Wege seines Leben ist
 und
 Welche nebst gnädig mitwirkender
 Erleuchtung Gottes
 zum Erkantnisz
 Gottes, Christi und Sein Selbst
 So Wohl auch
 Zu eines jeden eignen Seelenheil
 Gantz nutz und Dienlich seyn können
 Kurtzlich und einfältig angezeigt
 von
 B. H.
 MDCCXXV

This is another beautiful 8vo., 500-page specimen of fine penmanship. It is a treatise on Revealed Theology. In it he discusses such questions as, Who and what is God? How and where has God revealed Himself? Whereunto was Man created? What was God's purpose in creating Man? How was Man created? What caused the fall of Man? etc.

To think that Balthasar Hoffmann wrote these three masterpieces—"Hexatomus," "Epistasia," and "Hodophaenum"—of 2,460 pages, executed in the finest penmanship with a quill pen, during the few years he was at the Imperial Court in Vienna, and then most of the time under surveillance, almost surpasses human understanding.

Memorial Day Sermons

Of the many sermons he preached on this day, from 1743 to 1763, seventeen are still extant. Christopher Schultz, in the copies of his own "Gedächtniss Tag" sermons, says that Balthasar Hoffmann kept all the sermons he delivered on this particular day from 1740, the year of Weiss' death, to the year of his own death (1775). He states, furthermore, that the preachers at that time were requested to keep such a record. After the death of George Weiss, Hoffmann frequently preached both in the forenoon

and also in the afternoon. We find that he did so particularly in 1755, on which occasion he preached on Faith, and its necessity, in the forenoon, and on Justification, which comes of faith, in the afternoon.

Here is another large tome:

Edifying and Useful
 Meditations
 Composed during the years 1737-1768
 by
 B. H.
 In Three Parts
 1. Meditations on the Holy Scriptures.
 Old and New Testaments
 2. Other useful Meditations and Perceptions
 of Christian Doctrine
 3. Meditations on Hymns
 Assembled and Compiled
 by
 Christopher Hoffmann
 MDCCXCXV

This is a folio of 878 pages, with 42 lines to the page, executed in the finest penmanship possible, with marginal notes and additions, bound in board and covered with leather, with brass mountings and clasps. No doubt the binding is the workmanship of Christopher Hoffmann, his son.

Catechetical Works

There are several works of this kind: a volume, 8vo. of 524 pages of questions and answers on the Gospel texts for Sabbath and Holy Days, and for the youth, composed by Balthasar Hoffmann, 1744-45, and later combined with answers, compiled by George Kriebel, 1746.

There is another volume, 8vo. of 204 pages of questions and answers based on the twelve articles of the Apostles' Creed, compiled by B. H., 1746. This is a mighty fine little book, a fine specimen both of penmanship and of bookbinding. Still another is:

A Useful and Simple
 Text
 On the Truth of the Confession
 of
 Christian Doctrine and Belief
 Simplified through Questions and Answers
 Composed
 by
 B. H.
 MDCCIX
 And copied again in MDCCCL

There are many more smaller tracts and pamphlets and short treatises—on Salvation, 1739; on the Sacraments, 1763-

¹⁷ "Hodophaenum" comes from two Greek words: *hodos*, road or way; and *phaino*, to bring light; hence "hodophaenum" is "a light on the way."

64; on Matrimony, 1768; on the Seven Words of Christ on the Cross. There are Extracts from his Meditations on the Resurrection and Ascension, 1745; on the Magnificat, 1745. In an old Bible printed in Germantown was found a theological discussion of Matthew 24:28, on a comment which in his opinion is not correct. There are numerous other small tracts and comments.

In 1727 he compiled a book of prayers and hymns for morning and evening and at mealtimes. A copy of this was made in 1753 by his son Christopher and his wife Rosina. The title page is in red and black with the initials C. H. in the two upper corners and R. H. in the two lower corners. It contains 315 pages and double index at the end.

George Weiss had already, in 1720, written a tract: "Kurtzer Unterschied und Gegeneinandersetzung des Wahren und Falschen Verstandes bei den Handlungen der Sacramenten." By 1764, Balthasar Hoffmann wrote a tract: "Bekennnissz und Bezeugen von der Einsetzung Christi, so genant ist, das Brotbrechen" (statement on the Institution of the Lord's Supper). He says he wrote this tract because of questions¹⁸ submitted to him regarding the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. In 1875 Rev. Joshua Schultz had these two tracts printed under the title "Glaubens-Lehren und Bekenntnisse der Zwei ersten Predigern der Schwenckfelder in Amerika, von den Sacramenten."

Balthasar Hoffmann was also apprehensive of the lukewarmness of his people in regard to their doctrine of Faith and the lack of understanding it. This problem exercised him during the last several years of his life, 1769-1774. There is one treatise of his on "The Religious Condition of the Schwenckfelders." He stated his views about this condition so that posterity might know that he was apprehensive about it. In it he refers to his suggestion concerning a Christian Church (an organized congregation?) about which he wrote in his "Bekänntniss," December, 1763.

III. *Meditations and Expositions of Hymns.* This was a favorite theme of

¹⁸ E. g., "Are people who are not baptized entitled to partake of the Communion?" Christopher Schultz.

his. There are some twenty entries of this kind; but we shall refrain from citing these and entering into a discussion of them. Balthasar Hoffmann's distinction as a hymnologist has already been dwelt upon.

It has already been stated that Balthasar Hoffmann was a man of great modesty and humility. This note of "einfältigkeit," simplicity, runs through all his works and shows itself in all his actions. It may be that this feeling and desire to be simple and unobtrusive induced the man to disguise his real name under a pseudonym: "Barachiah Heber;" this name is found on the title page of a number of his works; occasionally only the initials B. H. are found; at other times he may have implied these initials by placing prominently on the title page two words beginning with these letters.

Pseudonyms, in general, have no meaning; they are simply used to disguise the real name. But the writer is fearless in asserting that such is not the case in this instance. He has for some time suspected that there is a definite meaning behind this pseudonym, so-called. We inquired of our Hebrew friends who are excellent Hebrew scholars. They all say, without any hesitation, that "Barachiah" is a Hebrew word meaning "blessed;" and that "Heber" is likewise a Hebrew word meaning "comrade, or companion" — hence "Blessed companion (?)."

The man had too great an aversion for vainglorious acts, idle talk, and the wanton wastefulness of time, energy, and effort to engage or indulge in any unprofitable performances. His long useful life, crowded with tasks and incidents that might have crushed many another, is an indication of this.

After one has viewed this man's busy life, scanned his voluminous literary works and has learned to appreciate his wisdom and profound scholarship, one ventures the assertion that he was one of the most, if not the most, eminent scholar surely among the Schwenckfelders, and among other peoples as well, of his day.

It was said of old: "Seest thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean [obscure] men." Such a man was Balthasar Hoffmann.

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- HOFFMANN, BALTHASAR, Bedencken über das Lied: O gläubig Hertze benedeÿ. etc.
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- HOFFMANN, BALTHASAR, Vier Betrachtungen, was denen zukommt u. zutheil wird, welche die Geburt Christi erkennen, und denen sie offenbar wird, aus dem Liede: Ey lasst uns jetzt allsamt, mit unserm, etc.
- HOFFMANN, BALTHASAR, Summarium Christlicher Theologie in 4. Theil abgetheilet, abgehandelt am Gedächtnis-Tage 1743.
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CHRISTOPHER KRIEBEL (1724-1800)

Catechist, Minister, Writer

By SELINA GERHARD SCHULTZ

On the ship that brought the main body of Schwenckfelder immigrants to Pennsylvania in 1734, there were three lads by the name of Christopher, who later took an important and responsible part as teachers, preachers and leaders of the group. The oldest of these was Christopher Schultz, then sixteen years of age; Christopher Kriebel, the subject of this sketch, was ten; and Christopher Hoffmann, preacher and book-binder, son of the famous Balthasar Hoffmann, was but seven years of age.

Parentage

Christopher Kriebel's parents—Christopher Kriebel, Sr., and Maria Heydrich—left their home and possessions in Nieder Harpersdorf, Silesia, on the night of February 21, 1726, with five little children: George, aged eleven; Susanna, 8; Anna, 4; Christopher, 2; and Maria, 16 days. They journeyed on foot to Saxony, approximately fifty miles westward, carrying such personal effects as could be taken. Two additional children were born to them before they left Saxony eight years later for Pennsylvania: Rosina and Abraham. The latter, a babe of one year, died on the voyage to America, July 12, 1734, and was buried at sea.

In Saxony

Among those who fled persecution with them on that night of February 21, 1726, were their relatives: Melchior Schultz, Melchior Kriebel, and Balthasar Heydrich, with their families. Eight years later all of these trekked another fifty miles to the Elbe River, the first step in their long and wearisome journey to America. Christopher's father was ill when they landed at Philadelphia, September 22, 1734. He was a farmer by trade. The farm which he had owned in Silesia before the flight was taken over by his brother, Hans Georg Kriebel, who died in 1730. The next owner was Friedrich Berger. (See Brecht, G. R., p. 228.)

In Pennsylvania

The first six months after their landing in Pennsylvania were spent by the Schwenckfelder group in a search for a large tract of land in the already partially settled districts, where all of them might settle and thus live close together. Being unsuccessful in this effort, they decided to purchase land individually. On March 26, 1735, Christopher's father bought a tract of 150 acres, one-half mile north of the present Salford Schwenckfelder Church. Less than two months later he broke his leg. The mother died in 1738; Christopher, the father, three years later, 1741. Both lie buried in the cemetery at Salford Schwenckfelder Church.

In 1741 Christopher inherited his father's farm. On retiring in 1784, he sold 125½ acres of it to his son Jeremiah for 700 pounds in specie. He owned also other tracts of land, conjointly with his brother George. In 1748, he married Maria Drescher. Balthasar Hoffmann performed the ceremony, August 10, 1748, and wrote a letter of friendly admonition to the couple. Christopher Kriebel won the goodwill and favor of his neighbors and countrymen. He was called frequently to be a witness to the signing of releases, bonds, agreements and wills. He was one of the supporters of the Schwenckfelder School System, subscribing 30 pounds to the original fund in 1764. In 1756, during the French and Indian Wars, he contributed to a fund of 260 pounds to aid The Friendly Association in preserving peace among the Indians along the frontier.

In May, 1784, Christopher Kriebel sold his farm to his son and in 1797 he retired from the ministry. His last years were spent in spinning and writing, which he said were easiest for him. His wife, Maria Drescher, died December 30, 1772. Writing of this event to his friend, Heintze, in Silesia, he said they had lived

happily together for 24 years. Christopher Kriebel died December 31, 1800. He and his wife rest in the cemetery at Salford Schwenckfelder Church. The inscription on his tombstone very appropriately reads: "Christopher Kriebel, Lehrer der Schwenckfeldischen Gemeinde."

Education and Training

Before 1764, there was no organized system of education among the Schwenckfelders. Instruction, whether religious or secular, was privately conducted. The golden hours of youth were, however, not wasted in either physical or mental indolence. Children were taught early to copy hymns, sermons and theological treatises to acquaint them with Schwenckfelder religious literature and history, as well as to help them acquire efficiency in the reading, spelling and writing of the German language. Furthermore, by this method some of them acquired a small library of manuscript books. Very few printed books were available aside from those brought and sent from Silesia in the early days of their life in Pennsylvania. As many another Schwenckfelder youth, Christopher Kriebel kept mind and hand busy, in hours that were free from physical toil, copying some Schwenckfelder literature. We may be sure that the religious leader of the group, George Weiss, who lived not far away from the Kriebel home, gave the promising young Christopher kindly advice, help and guidance in acquiring an education. Balthasar Hoffmann, too, another neighbor, a capable instructor in languages, gladly gave of his store of wisdom. These two men were the first great teachers of Schwenckfelder youth in this country. Whatever education Christopher Kriebel acquired, he undoubtedly owed to them. For such as he, whose daily life was filled with toil to win house and home, food and raiment, in a wild country, study, meditation, reading and writing were a blessed and highly profitable diversion for the soul. The love for such intellectual and spiritual exercise was an innate characteristic of the Schwenckfelder immigrants. It appears to have been particularly marked in the three Christophers. Whether consciously or uncon-

sciously, Christopher Kriebel in his early manhood was preparing himself for thirty or more years of sincere and devoted service to his people, in particular to youth. His later correspondence and other writings, as well as his sermons and catechetical work, give evidence of his excellent knowledge of the Bible and of his keen conception of the writings and doctrine of Caspar Schwenckfeld and his fellow-believers.

At First Schwenckfelder Conference

After the death of George Weiss in 1740, his method of conducting worship services and religious instruction was continued for a time by Balthasar Hoffmann, but somewhat loosely because of the health of the leader, of much indifference among his people, and of varying opinions. In 1753, some heads of families agreed among themselves, in order to promote religious culture, to visit each other in their homes in rotation, every two or three Sundays and to discuss questions of doctrine and hold services. But this plan proved unsatisfactory. On October 9, 1762, the first general conference of the Schwenckfelders was held at the home of Christopher Kriebel. For this occasion he prepared and read a paper which met with the approval of the conference. It was at this time also that Christopher Schultz was instructed to prepare his manuscript catechism for printing. A system, or plan, for worship services was now devised which remained in practice for twenty years, or until the adoption of a constitution in 1782. The details are given in a letter by Christopher Schultz to Silesia: The Sunday forenoon religious services were conducted by the heads of families jointly. Each had as much right as another to give expression to a thought or exhortation, from hymns or books, after which it was discussed, but he in whose house the meeting was held provided material for the forenoon services which consisted of singing, prayer, reading of Gospel Lesson, singing of another hymn, reading of a sermon and closing with prayer. The afternoon was devoted to catechization of the children who were divided into classes according to age. Christopher Kriebel succeeded

Balthasar Hoffmann in 1764 in conducting these catechetical classes in the Lower District, and his cousin Christopher Schultz in the Upper District, comprising altogether about fifty children and youths.

The Catechist*

According to a record written by his own hand, it was in said year (1764) that the so-called Haus-Vaeter of the Schwenckfelders formally requested him to assume the charge of the catechization of their youth (cf. H. W. Kriebel: "The Schwenckfelders in Pennsylvania," page 62, for definition of Haus-Vaeter). From the death of George Weiss in 1740 to the year 1763, the work of catechising the young had been permitted to suffer interruptions. The catechist in this period was Balthasar Hoffmann.

In consideration of the distinction of his predecessors, George Weiss and Balthasar Hoffmann, it was with some hesitation that Christopher Kriebel yielded to the appeal of the "patres familiarum." However, on Trinity Sunday of said year, "Kinderlehr" was resumed under his direction. Following is a statement of the subject matter which received catechetical treatment during the first nine years. 1. The "Gospel Lessons" for the Sundays and holy days of the church year. 2. The "Epistle Texts" for the church year. 3. The Catechism of Christopher Schultz (1st edition, Philadelphia, 1763). Each meeting was opened with an exposition of the "Gospel Lesson" for the day.

Beginning with the year 1773, the matter and the method underwent a modification. Certain hymns setting forth the cardinal Christian doctrines were made the basis of the studies of teacher and class. This plan was pursued for four years, and so exhaustive was the method that in the whole of this period but seven hymns were treated. The three subsequent years were devoted to a study of the Epistle to the Ephesians and First and Second Thessalonians.

For a period of five years, beginning 1780, the Kinderlehr studies were con-

finied to the three Epistles of St. John and the Hebrews. The years 1785-1792, inclusive, were devoted to a verse-for-verse study of the Gospel of St. John, and the remaining five years of Kriebel's service as catechist were occupied with a similar consecutive study of the Acts of the Apostles.

For a period of thirty-three years, this untiring teacher met his catechumens on Sunday afternoon throughout the year, and occasionally on holy days. Upwards of 2,000 sessions were held. The results of his private studies in preparation for his official duties were carefully recorded, lesson for lesson, and are extant in four large volumes, closely written, in the author's own hand. They represent an activity which is at once noteworthy, unique and distinctively Schwenckfeldian. As to the method of this catechist, suffice it to say, that it is a veritable picture of exactness and exhaustiveness, and that it was eminently intensive.

In this extraordinary activity of Christopher Kriebel are reflected four definite ideals of the man: 1. The aim to be habitually an intensive student of "The Book," and to lead others into the habit of abiding in the Word. 2. The purpose to thoroughly ground the youth in Christian doctrine. 3. The design to perpetuate the practice of family worship. 4. The ideal which springs from the conviction that the devotional study of the Bible is indispensable to the Christian. Who will measure the lasting good which is attributable to these labors? In a larger sense than was intended, doubtless, by its author, the inscription upon his tombstone continues significantly true: "Christopher Kriebel, Lehrer der Schwenckfeldischen Gemeinde."

Each of the four volumes of Catechetical questions and answers bears the general title: *Jugendlicher Handel*.

Vol. 1, an 8vo of 817 pages—Studies in form of questions and answers on hymns and on the Epistles conducted 1773-1779.

Vol. 2, 8vo of 853 pages—Studies, in questions and answers, on the Epistles of John and Hebrews, 1780.

Vol. 3, 4° of 1,172 pages—Studies, in questions and answers, on the Gospel of St. John, 1792.

Vol. 4, 4° of 995 pages—Studies, in

* Adapted from Allen Anders Seipt, "Christopher Kriebel, the Schwenckfelder Catechist," *The Schwenckfeldian*, Vol. 5, pp. 56-58.

questions and answers, on Acts of the Apostles, 1797.

His Writings

Although definite records of all young Christopher did are lacking, we know that he copied some manuscript volumes in his early years. Among them are the Schwenckfelder hymn-book, in 2 volumes. These are excellent specimens of accuracy and diligence. At some time before he was 38 years of age, he composed eight hymns which were included in the first printed hymn-book of the Schwenckfelders in 1762 in which sixty authors are represented. They are Nos. 492, 714, 715, 716, 742, 745, 746, 747.

In 1750, at the age of twenty-six, he copied a book of prayers. This book was a combination of three prayer books, 1. Caspar Schwenckfeld's "Deutsch Passional" ("Corpus Schw. VI," Doc. 301); 2. his "Psalter Gebettsweise gestellet," ("Corpus Schw. V," Doc. 254); 3. Prayers composed by a pious, unnamed man, on the Gospels, including also prayers by Michael Hiller, Georg Frell and others, entitled: "Ein Schön Christliches Geistreiches Gebett-Buch bestehende in zwanzig Classen oder Theilen ausz dreÿen geistreichen gebettbüchern zusammen getragen, etc., Und abermahl abgeschrieben von mir Ch. Kr. 1750."

The paper which he prepared and presented at the first Schwenckfelder general conference held at his house on October 9, 1762, marks his entrance into active service in the religious training of Schwenckfelder youth.

This paper is an admonition to the Schwenckfelders to consider their present status and the need of co-operation in an effort to create unity of life and action, and to remember and consider gratefully: 1. The rescue out of the hands of the persecutors who tried to force them into horrible error. 2. The restoration of all that was lost in the fatherland, in the form of freedom now enjoyed in this land, as well as material things. 3. The rich blessing in sustenance provided here for them. 4. Security against the famine existing in the fatherland. 5. Emancipation from the depredations of Indians. 6. The blessing of the peace terms with the Indians. 7. The granting of life until this time so that

these blessings may be meditated upon. All these should impel them not only to gratitude, but also to use the blessings in a manner pleasing to God, to reach out the hand to each other, to strive after the best gifts, the spiritual, not in selfish-devotion to the temporal and the physical, and thereby be found lacking in the service of God.

Correspondence

In the course of his activity Christopher Kriebel also wrote many letters to members of the Schwenckfelder group. Most of these deal with doctrinal questions, but occasionally contain also a few valuable historical data. Sometimes he enclosed a hymn or two, presumably of his own composition, or quotations from hymns. He made copies of his letters, and those of others, and preserved both these and letters he received. After he had retired from the catechetical work and ministry in 1796, he completed two collections of writings. One of these he called: "Eine Sammlung Mancherley Schrifften und Betrachtungen . . . zusammen geordnet 1798 von Chr. Kr." This is a volume in quarto, of 632 pages, carefully written. He was then 74 years of age. It is, as the title says, a collection of various writings: letters, hymns, prayers, and twenty sermons on the Sacraments. The letters and treatises are of the period 1765-1791. In the preface he says: "There are two papers in this collection which were not written by members of the Schwenckfelder congregation. This may surprise those who may think that the truth is to be found only in our literature and that no other should be read. But when we remember that God has His own everywhere and imparts to each that which will edify His Church, then it may not appear wrong to read the testimony of others. Under such a well-intentioned conviction, namely, that only with us, pure, fundamental truth exists, it can easily happen that practices creep in unnoticed which do not harmonize with Scripture . . . Therefore, it would be advisable, when criticizing other people or their literature, to strive in lowliness and humility to entertain a scrutiny of oneself and others that is pleasing to God."

Among the letters in this collection,

the first one, August 11, 1765, is addressed to Anna Drescher who had frequently inquired whether it could not be arranged that Christopher Schultz come (to the Lower District) to preach. Christopher Kriebel agrees with her in this wish, but thinks they should look to God and pray that He prepare them inwardly to receive such an address . . . because Christian doctrine demands not only the hearing but also the doing, or living, in accordance . . . "We should pray for those who address us . . . we should pray for Christopher Schultz, for he cannot do anything of himself."

Writing to his cousin, Melchior Kriebel, about Freedom of Conscience, in answer to the question whether their meetings should be free to everyone or anyone to attend, he says: "Christ died for all. According to the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, we keep our meetings free, that anyone may attend as they wish. We can forbid no one for we have no permission to do so. When a certain house-father at Methacton invited us to hold services in his house, we did so . . . There are few services held in Goshenhoppen where there are not men, women, children, and servants present from the neighborhood. The same attitude is observed at funerals . . . I consider our doctrine worth not only to be spoken of in private, but also in public, with each other."

To Rosina Hartranft, evidently one of his catechumens, he writes in 1776: "Do not allow frivolity to deprive you of doctrinal instruction. Begin with Christ, look to Him, that is the foundation of doctrine." He begs her not to be discouraged, but to attend instruction again even though she was unable to answer all his questions, and bids her choose which course she will follow.

His interest in Christian Missions appears in a correspondence with Adolph Meyer, a Moravian of Lititz, Pennsylvania, whom he asks to lend him for a time the printed account of a mission among the heathen (conducted by the Moravians). He assures him he will be careful of it and return it to the Bruderhaus in Philadelphia. Mr. Meyer may send the account to the same place, where he will call for it. He read the

one about the Greenland Mission some time ago, and about those among North American Indians, those in South America, in islands of the West Indies, and in Africa.

In a letter of February 23, 1780, to George Kriebel, his cousin, who wrote to him saying he had read again his sermon on Memorial Day of the previous year (*i. e.*, 1779), Christopher Kriebel says many have a prejudiced opinion concerning the value or importance of the ministry, the inward Word and the external word. This is due to the fact that formerly precautions had to be taken that the external was not stressed unduly. Gradually an entirely different opinion crept in, and with it the feeling of security that we had the truth . . . The external word reaches the external man . . . I am confident that this has foundation in Scripture, that the ministry and instruction are very important and very helpful to salvation and to edification, but by proper use . . . Did Christ do anything without teaching? Is not sin pointed out by teaching?

A memoranda for youth, concerning instruction, is one of the documents contained in this volume. It bears the date, September, 1781, and is a very earnest appeal to parents and house-fathers in behalf of the need and importance of religious instruction of youth, by Melchior Kriebel (G. R. 351), who subsequently became a Schwenckfelder preacher. He says it is hardly sufficient to devote only two or three hours every two weeks to religious instruction. Parents themselves should attend meetings, should discuss religious topics with the children, at table, three times daily, instead of other empty talk. He considers the present indifference or negligence an act of disobedience in the sight of God.

In December, 1783, Christopher Kriebel, commenting on the foregoing, said: "If, after such a thorough and lucid presentation concerning religious instruction, there is no greater response than has been the case hitherto, it may well be regarded as disobedience and wilfulness against God."

Having been accused of preaching contrary to Schwenckfeldian doctrine in 1782, he was requested by the house-

fathers to write his views on certain doctrinal points. This he did and was exonerated by the house-fathers who reported they were satisfied with his statement, having found nothing in it to criticize.

To Christian Kriebel (G. R. 350), a young man then 27 years of age, concerned about religious instruction of the young, Christopher Kriebel replied in a letter, July 5, 1791, that he conducted catechetical instruction for 26 years, but never felt it a burden; from his youth he always had a desire for study of Christian doctrine, and prays that they (the Schwenckfelders) may remain steadfast in recognized truth which is founded on God, and that they may never depart from it. In another letter to the same young man, August 4, 1791, he says the young house-fathers and mothers generally have slight interest in Christian doctrine, hence contribute little to the study, either in meeting or at home; God only knows what will become of such a people.

His Collection of Letters

A volume of letters, termed a "Schriftten Sammlung," was compiled by Christopher Kriebel during the years 1765-1792. The handwriting is a very fine type of German script, closely written, but of great clearness and beauty, varying on only a few pages. It is a quarto of three hundred and thirty-nine pages, comprising forty-three letters. These letters he copied from the original letters known as the "Heintze Correspondence," carried on between the Schwenckfelders who came to Pennsylvania in 1734 and those of the same faith who remained in Silesia. The principal correspondents were Christopher Kriebel and Christopher Schultz of Pennsylvania on the one hand, and Carl Ehrenfried Heintze of Probsthayn, Silesia, on the other. Hundreds of letters were exchanged, sometimes in packets of forty or more. The Revolutionary War finally disrupted this correspondence. Many of the originals are still preserved in the Schwenckfelder Historical Library.

His hope in copying these letters for preservation in durable book form was, as stated in his preface, that they might be of benefit to the thoughtful reader,

citing: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good," I Thessalonians 5:21. Other Bible citations which he entered on the second leaf are: Colossians 3:15; Ephesians 5:19; I Thessalonians 5:11; I Timothy 4:13.

These letters contain veritable sermons on various themes, also prayers, admonitions, arguments on points of doctrine, quotations from hymns, as well as very interesting and valuable personal and historical data. Christopher Kriebel's evaluation of them was correct. They can be of benefit to the thoughtful reader. They contain also the very interesting facts regarding the printing of the "Erläuterung" in 1771. They are not arranged chronologically.

A. F. H. Schneider, of Berlin, Germany, in his researches, came across a package of the originals and said: "From all these there shines forth a pious and peaceful mind. The condition of these Schwenckfelders is continually good. In expression, most of these letters are correct, fluent and cultured." (H. W. K., p. 184.)

The earliest letter of this collection is dated May, 1765, "Armenruh im Felde." It was dictated by Balthasar Kurtz and written by Carl E. Heintze. It was the second letter sent by Kurtz to the Schwenckfelders in Pennsylvania in general, but addressed to Balthasar Hoffmann in particular. The first one does not appear in this book. Because of his great age and inability to write, Kurtz dictated to Heintze who then wrote a postscript to the same in which he introduces himself to the Schwenckfelders of Pennsylvania on this wise: "Mein Name ist Carl Ehrenfried Heintze, Buerger in Schoenau, Wohnhaft in Probsthayn. Meine Profession ist Leinwand drucken." He further relates how he had been concerned about his spiritual welfare for many years and had spent much time studying the three prevailing religions of that time but was not satisfied. Finally he studied the doctrine of Caspar Schwenckfeld and became a devoted follower of that faith. This then was the man to whom most of Christopher Kriebel's and Christopher Schultz's letters were addressed and were answered with such sincere devotion for many years; the man who rendered such valuable

service in the publication of the "Erläuterung."

Of personal items which pertain to Christopher Kriebel and his contemporaries in the Schwenckfelder ministry we have gleaned the following from this correspondence:

In 1768, Memorial Day was held at the home of Christopher's brother, George. Christopher Schultz delivered the sermon about which Christopher Kriebel wrote to Heintze and sent him a summary. (Subsequently he sent him summaries of other Memorial Day addresses by Schultz.) He expressed his very high regard for Christopher Schultz, his cousin; calls him his bosom-friend; says the latter has more physical as well as spiritual gifts than he; that he is more ingenious and has keener judgment in evaluating everything in detail; that he is an expert in writing and translating English; that he loves Christopher Kriebel so much that he does all he can to help him, as well as to help everyone that asks him; he knows so well how to give sincere advice. In reporting the death of Christopher Schultz to Silesian friends, in May, 1792, Kriebel says: "You in Silesia should have had a man like Christopher Schultz." On the other hand Christopher Schultz in a letter to Heintze says that Christopher Kriebel is a genuinely sincere soul; that they are together a great deal; that Kriebel's position in the Lower District is a difficult one because of so many different opinions (referring to the preference of some for the writings of Jacob Boehme and Jane Leade, etc.); that he has charge of Sunday afternoon instruction; that his brother George is a real Nathanael, who, if he could write as he can speak would be a remarkable man; to serve God and his neighbor, George would go through fire.

Both Christophers complained in their letters to their Silesian friends about the difficulty of keeping the little band of Schwenckfelders in this country intact as a group; they foresaw ruin (Christopher Schultz's cousin Melchior and others also

were firm friends of the writings of Jacob Boehme). "This country is a confluence of persecuted and oppressed people of many different religious opinions," they told them, and admonished old and young in Silesia to hold fast to Schwenckfeldian teachings.

In a letter of March 1, 1773, Christopher Kriebel reports to Heintze that on November 7, 1772, he went to Philadelphia and was pleased to receive the first chest of copies of the "Erläuterung." This was an important event in their lives. In this letter he also expresses his firm belief that Schwenckfeld's doctrine shows the way to God. Was not John, the Baptist, sent to prepare the way of the Lord? Would the Jews have sinned if they had permitted themselves to be led to Christ through John's teaching? Would they have regretted it? Has his teaching in the Bible been in vain all this time, that one should regret spending time in meditation upon it? Should one likewise regret spending time together in prayerful and humble consideration of the doctrine of Schwenckfeld and other devout men as a staff and a guide to Christ? Should that be regarded as bad partiality? We should of course not accept any pious writings for Christ Himself, but merely as a witness or testimony that points to Him. The Lord said of the Scriptures: "They bear witness of me." And Paul says: "Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, etc." Christopher Kriebel was especially keen in detecting erroneous theological opinions and gently correcting them.

At the time of the organization of the Schwenckfelder Church and the adoption of the constitution, 1782, Christopher Kriebel was appointed to serve regularly as a minister in the Lower District. Thenceforth his house, as in the days of George Weiss, when it was his father's house, was one of the places where the Schwenckfelders held regular worship services, conferences and Memorial Day Services, until the first meeting houses were built.



CHRISTOPHER KRIEBEL

The Minister and His Sermons

By LEVI S. HOFFMAN

There was no regularly elected Schwenckfelder minister on the *St. Andrew*, which anchored at Philadelphia in 1734, but there were six people on that ship who later became ministers of the Schwenckfelder denomination. One of the youngest of this number was Christopher Kriebel, the subject of this dissertation.

Preparation

Christopher Kriebel was ten years old, just six years younger than the diarist Christopher Schultz, at the time of that famous exodus. He was at the age when children see everything, imitate leading characters, drink in knowledge, and retain the impressions made upon their minds. He was a cousin of Christopher Schultz, hailing from a prominent family in Silesia. Being only two years of age at the time of the flight into Saxony in 1726, he knew nothing about the trials, forced baptisms and church attendance, secret meetings, repeated petitions for toleration, interments in the "Viehweg" without ceremonies. To a boy of ten years the trip down the Elbe River, the voyage across the Atlantic Ocean must have offered never-to-be-forgotten experiences—the terrible storms, the impure water, the unwholesome food, the seasickness and fatal diseases, the baby brother who died and was buried at sea, the great excitement on September 17th when a sailor up on the mast cried "Land! Land!", the repeated glimpses of the New World from that day until the landing on September 22nd, the strange sights in the city, the first services during the early days, the first ventures, explorations, and settlement in their new homes.

We have no painting of the man, no biography of his life, no anecdotes from his teachers, no records from his Alma Mater. We have a store of knowledge about him as a teacher, but practically no information about him as a student. Certainly one who taught so long, so

successfully and so conscientiously must have been a diligent scholar. His first teachers undoubtedly were his parents. Most likely he was one of the catechumens who studied under the direction of the catechist, George Weiss, and was an ardent listener when Weiss preached. Since his home was not very far away from that of Balthasar Hoffmann, we are privileged to assume that he received instruction also from him and was a faithful worshipper as long as Balthasar Hoffmann conducted the services. It must be supposed that his father had very few books, but that Christopher read with care whatever books he could borrow, and that he had a good memory. He listened to the house-fathers and copied the sermons of Michael Hiller and others. From the writings of Schwenckfeld he quoted the Church Fathers: St. Augustine, Chrysostom, Hieronymus, etc., frequently and at length. He quoted hymns, was a careful student of the Bible and a convinced believer that "Wisdom is the principal thing," and that "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

He farmed before the era of modern machinery. He lived at the frontier where many exciting and trying things were taking place. There were the atrocities of the Indians, the resentments against England, the pangs of the "Test Act," the billeting of the soldiers, the maneuvering of the army, the looting of the stragglers, the taunts and chidings at the non-militants, and all the hardships connected with the prolonged Revolutionary War. In every sense of the word, they experienced the turmoils, the crucial reactions, the subtle movements and varied enterprises necessarily involved in the conception and the affecting of a new nation on this continent. These were very trying circumstances for the Schwenckfelders who had found a haven of refuge in the colony of Pennsylvania; who had taken the oath of allegiance to Great Britain with the full

intent of keeping it; who had no grievances against England; who believed that harmony should be restored between Great Britain and the colonies and that war was always un-Christian.

Besides all this, there were appeals of all sorts in ever-increasing numbers for contributions and assistance. Christopher Kriebel was Overseer of the Poor, and one of four men appointed by Dr. Abraham Wagner to distribute one-third of his estate to the poor. The care of the sick and the needy was of grave concern to him. He made elaborate plans and spent much time in religious instruction; he helped to organize and support schools for secular education. He was deeply interested in the organization of the Schwenckfelder Church, the drafting and adoption of the Church Constitution, the erection of meeting houses, the preservation and dissemination of the Schwenckfelder tenets, the furtherance of the Gospel and the promotion of worship. He was a copyist, took an active part in the "Heintze Correspondence," and offered his home as a place for worship, for committee meetings, and all worthy gatherings. He never graduated from any institution. He was a life-long student of religious and secular truths. He was a herald of, and a participant in, the daily affairs of men. He lived in an era when faith removed mountains, and in a country where for the weal of men and the glory of God the impossible was forever being undertaken.

The Call of the Prophet

Many of our people feel keenly that the Christian ministry should be more frequently stressed and the young should be urged to consider the work and prepare to enter the profession. Proper encouragement is always commendable while persistent efforts in so many cases bring about undesirable situations. In fact, that was not the procedure of our forefathers, neither the method in the Biblical era. The great prophets were all called directly by God. No ecclesiastical or philanthropic organization called a single one of them. Paul probably could not be persuaded by any of the disciples to become an apostle but God knew how to win him. In a certain sense, ministers are born; if a student is not a minister

when he enters college he is most likely none when he graduates from the theological seminary. It has been well said: "God calls only those who are active in service." In that case Christopher Kriebel was eligible for a call. He was a busy man. Schwenckfeld said: "The better I prepare myself the better I am qualified when the opportunity comes." In this respect Christopher Kriebel followed in the footprints of the reformer. He worked hard and was prepared for active service when the need arose. The sincere penitent prayed: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: Try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." That was the attitude of Christopher Kriebel toward his God and in that spirit he was ready and willing to be led from the simple duties to the joys and greater responsibilities of sacred trusts. Christopher Kriebel had nothing to conceal, nothing to be ashamed of, his life was an open book to his contemporaries on that memorable day in the year 1782, when they congregated and after they had prayed unto God for guidance, cast their votes and elected him a minister of the Schwenckfelder Church. No doubt, before this he had heard the true Schwenckfelder call: the inner voice of God stirring the heart and directing the mind of his servant. As Moses was 80 years old when God called him and commissioned him to become the great leader of the Israelites, so Christopher Kriebel was practically three score years when God called him through his servants to become the pastor and preacher of a conscientious people. And what a task he performed after that day!

The Order of Worship

During the early period of Christopher Kriebel's ministry there were no meeting houses; the people congregated in private houses, occasionally on the threshing floor of the barn. It was a simple, non-liturgical form of worship. The order of service was practically the same each Sunday. The service was opened with brief comments by the minister before he announced the hymn. The entire hymn was read by the minister. Before there were enough hymn books for the mem-

bers of the congregation the minister read the hymn "Zeilenweise," that is, by lines, to enable them to sing the words from memory. After the hymn the Scripture Lesson for the day was read, followed by a prayer, at the conclusion of which the chorister began a stanza of a hymn suggested by the thought of the prayer and the whole congregation joined in the singing. The main part of the service was the sermon, after which a hymn was sung, and a short prayer offered, followed by the benediction. The announcements, if any, were made after the benediction, with the concluding remarks: "Depart in peace."

Every minister and practically every family possessed a copy or two of the *Postils*, a book of sermons for the church year. Laymen read these sermons for the respective Sundays and holidays. The ministers, too, to a great extent, selected their text and sermon material from these homilies. This method became so thoroughly established for certain periods that to depart from the custom would have been regarded as very unorthodox to say the least. We may, therefore, infer that Christopher Kriebel heeded the example of his predecessors. From the records any reader would conclude that Weiss would adhere without fail to former Schwenckfelder customs since we are told that he objected when his followers read non-Schwenckfelder books. Hoffmann was a close second to Weiss. During the years when the house-fathers conducted the services these sermons from the *Postils* were always read. There is a possibility that during the transition period of migration, the former customs and order of worship were interrupted. It may be that Weiss and Hoffmann were more strictly confined and devoted to Schwenckfeld's doctrines than to the sermons of the church year. Because if they had strictly adhered to the outline and suggested texts for the church year it would not have been very likely that Christopher Kriebel would have departed from their precedent. Or was Christopher Kriebel more liberal and more conciliatory than they? Two facts are very plain, no matter how anyone explains them. Through the stern attitude and rigid requirements of Weiss, Dr. Abraham Wagner was

estranged, but he appointed Christopher Kriebel, his brother-in-law, as one of four men to distribute part of his estate to the poor. The second fact is that Christopher Kriebel departed from the order of sermons as suggested in the *Postils* because he preached sermon series of his own.

Sermon Series

In these sermon series we can study and understand the preacher, his ideas, talents, and characteristics. For now we see him in the element of his choice; here he is original; his sermons are planned and not patterned after another. His conception of salvation and Christian living is vividly portrayed. This is not an echo of Werner, Hiller, Weichenhan, or Hoburg. No! Here we hear the voice of a pioneer preacher, Christopher Kriebel. In plan, composition, and presentation, these sermons are not expository, exegetical, topical, formal, or stereotyped. They are scriptural, evangelical, instructive, impressive, uplifting and glorifying. There is a gospel to be proclaimed, a great need to be supplied, a disease to be cured, a physician to be introduced, a balm to be prescribed, a Christ to be enthroned, and souls to be saved. To accomplish this more successfully he attempted sermon-series methods. Dr. Henry Van Dyke, in the preface to "The Blue Flower," explains: "Sometimes short stories are brought together like parcels in a basket. Sometimes they grow together like blossoms on a bush. Then, of course, they really belong to one another, because they have the same life in them." In like manner these sermons have the same spirit in them. As a well-selected and balanced meal nourishes the body, so these spiritual ingredients edify the intellect, nurture the soul, and quicken the spirit for wholesome growth and Christian service.

His first sermon series consists of seven homilies. Six on repentance and penance, and the seventh on the forgiveness of sins. An ardent admirer congratulated a great minister and then asked him: "But why is it that you are preaching so often and constantly talking about 'Ye must be born again'?" His only reply was: "Because ye must be born again." There is no question in our

mind whatsoever that Christopher Kriebel preached these sermons because he felt constrained to preach them. He felt that Christ wanted him to preach repentance just as much as He wanted the Apostles to preach it; and that the people of his day needed the messages as much as they did in the days of the Lord. A summary of a sermon will speak for itself.

Summary of a Sermon on Repentance

That all the ministers are instructed to preach repentance, Christopher Kriebel infers from Luke 24:46, 47: "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to arise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations." That all the people are to repent, he derives from Mark 1:15: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel."

St. Augustine taught that all sinners must needs repent and seek forgiveness through Christ. Persistent efforts must be made because Satan is active and zealous to keep all from repenting and to prevent all conversions. The prophet clearly tells us that the Lord God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his evil ways and live. He points out instances where people have turned away from evil and were forgiven, as in Luke 7, the woman who had lost her name came to Jesus and revealed her gratefulness for His pardon; likewise Matthew the publican, etc.

It is clearly stated that all sinners are called to repent and that the teachers and preachers are instructed to lead sinners to Christ. Through Adam all have sinned; and it is not natural for man to discern the sad consequences of a sinful life. Man rather delights in the allurements of sin: but all who commit sin will reap the fruits of sin. Christopher Kriebel selects texts and illustrations from the books of the Apocrypha, especially Ecclesiasticus. The worldly man is not moved like David to sing: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God."

In true repentance two factors must be considered. First to get right with

God. Second, the testimony by nobler living. Those who do not live better lives are simply scoffers and mockers of repentance. Sinners alone cannot escape from sin and work out their own salvation. All should be willing to give that glory to God.

Should anyone ask: "Must I become free from all my sins?" For such the book about the Christian warfare by Erasmus of Rotterdam is recommended. For there is a religious warfare. We have to wrestle with temptation and sin and overcome. As Peter denied his Lord and wept when he heard the cock crow, so we must needs be grieved when the old sins overtake us, and weep when we hear the cock crow, as Peter did. There is bound to be a real struggle between the outer and the inner man. If we persist through the grace of Christ and the power of the Spirit, the inner man becomes gradually better and stronger and finally masters the outer man. So we can all eventually become more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

Memorial Day Services

In Christopher Kriebel's collection we find a copy containing all the Memorial Day sermons preached from 1782 to 1799. These services were held in private homes until 1791 when we read the insertion: "Held in the new Meeting House in Goshenhoppen. In 'The Schwenckfelders in Pennsylvania,' by H. W. Kriebel, we read on page 82: "The second meeting house was erected in 1791 where the present Washington Meeting House stands. The first services at this place were held on Memorial Day, Saturday, September 24, 1791." On this occasion Christopher Kriebel preached in the morning and George Kriebel in the afternoon. Since Christopher Schultz is buried in the Washington Schwenckfelder Cemetery, it is of interest to note that he died May 9, 1789. He had fallen asleep before the first Schwenckfelder Meeting House in America was erected. According to this book there were two sermons preached on Memorial Day. One in the forenoon and the other in the afternoon. From 1782 to 1786, Christopher Schultz preached all the morning sermons. Evidently in 1786 he preached his last Memorial Day ser-

mon. During that period Christopher Kriebel preached in the afternoon except in 1784 and 1786 when Christopher Hoffmann preached in the afternoon.

In recent years the main sermon for the day has been called the Historical Sermon. Since the writer's day there has been no unanimous agreement among our ministers as to what constitutes the Historical Sermon. A recital of the history of the religious persecutions of our forefathers is to be the subject matter of the message. Dr. Oscar Kriebel always said he had no objection to the presentation of such a narrative but he did not call that a sermon. His presentation was always a sermon with certain historical references interwoven. To our great surprise we discovered in this volume that in those early days they made very scant reference to their history. They preached no Historical Sermons. They propounded great religious subjects. That was their chief concern as the title page of this book explicitly states: "In auszügen, gehaltener Jährlicher Gedächtnis-Tages Reden, über verschiedene Wichtige Stücke Christlicher Lehre und Glaubens," *i. e.*, Epitomes of the Memorial Day sermons, about various significant articles of the Christian doctrines and beliefs.

A brief summary of the sermon which Christopher Kriebel preached on Memorial Day in the Upper District at the morning session in the year 1793 will speak for itself.

This sermon was apparently the last that Christopher Kriebel preached at the Memorial Day Services. It has a short preface wherein he refers to the time they lived in this country, the importance of this day; he refers to the Catholics and the Lutherans. He remarks about the safe arrival in 1734 under the leadership of Almighty God; the liberties enjoyed here and the opportunities and obligations implied. All of which is very brief and very unusual. It is rather the exception to the rule. Then he begins his discourse and preaches a great sermon on the significant theme:

The Plan of Salvation, or How Man Is Saved

After a few comments on Acts 2:37; Luke 16:3; and Acts 16:30, he reads his text: "My son, give me thine heart, and

let thine eyes observe my ways." Proverbs 23:26. His first point is, the heart. We belong to the Lord because He made us. We are to love Him with the whole heart. Like children take their problems to their parents; so we take everything unto the Lord in prayer. In fact, Christ invites us: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28. If we serve the Lord faithfully He will honor us. As His children and servants we are in this world to do the Master's will. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." The heart is the seat of the affections and emotions. "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."

"My son, give me thine heart." To love God with our whole heart means to believe in Him, and he that believeth on Him hath everlasting life. Where our treasures are there will our heart be also. We are so prone to put our trust in the treasures of the world; but we cannot serve God and mammon. What if we should become rich in world affairs. The Lord said to the rich man: "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" It is therefore better to become rich in the sight of God. Cast our lot with Christ and remain faithful unto death for then we shall receive the crown of life. Certainly in this case as in all others it is more blessed to give than to receive.

"My sons and daughters let thine eyes observe my ways."

We are the Lord's sons and daughters. "And I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." II Corinthians 6:18: "For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law." With David shall the devoted sons and daughters say: "O Lord of Hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee." "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." But on the other hand the true sons and daughters shall hear a word behind them saying, "Walk ye in it, when they turn to the right hand, and when they turn to the left." For they are following in the footsteps of Him

who said, "I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me." Full consecration is attained when we present our bodies a living Sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service.

Man is to be fully grounded in the ways of the Lord, to be endued by His spirit and power, to unfold in His image to grow in wisdom, become redeemed, lay hold on righteousness, holiness, and sanctification which is an outer manifestation of thriving salvation. Pray, strive, and persist in the Christian way until that service becomes a delight to you. For the forefathers the coming into this country was like entering into Zion where they could worship with gladness according to the dictates of their conscience. We their children, therefore, should worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness and establish His Kingdom in the hearts of men. This sermon ends with a beautiful prayer that it might come to pass.

And just to think that our forefathers thought it was not appropriate to hold such Memorial Day Services on Sunday. What would they say if they saw the Sabbath desecration of our day?

The Minister in His Shrine or Sanctuary

What does it mean to take a course in a theological seminary but to enter into the precincts of those who have mastered the arts, ways and means, all the science and rubrics of the Christian ministry; to listen to the lectures, study the books, carry on researches under supervision, master their policies and then go out and put their pet theories into practice, proving or disproving their resourcefulness. If such is the case, then Christopher Kriebel graduated, indeed, from the Theological Tenets of the Middle Way and the Mystical Contacts of the Pietists. He read their books, mastered their doctrines, imbibed their spirit, propounded their tenets, and grew in grace. These men did not have so many volumes in their libraries, but they had more mental resources. The Popes in their turns and the modern theologians so frequently are representatives of diplomatic masterpieces and popular clamors, thus winning prestige and thereby misrepresenting their Christ and His

Mission. These men had done with lesser things; they had risen to spiritual heights and were not afraid or ashamed to say: "Thus saith the Lord."

When Christopher Kriebel did not have a copy of a desirable treatise he simply copied it. Thereby he also mastered it. He copied fourteen of Michael Hiller's Funeral Sermons. They also had copies of funeral hymns later known as, "Der Sänger Am Grabe;" all the material necessary for effective service. These were written for spiritual instruction and comfort. They open with the salutation: "Dear Brothers and Sisters." In this list Ecclesiasticus rates as high as the other books of the Bible. From the expressions we know that Luther's translation was not used in the study of Michael Hiller. A particular thought presented is of more than passing interest: "Wir sollen sie freyen aus dem feggeuer. Das ist auch Vergeblich denn es ist kein feg-feuer." We shall deliver them from purgatory which is futile, since there is no purgatory. In the Old Testament Era there was none, so why should there be any in the days of grace? This conception of purgatory cannot be verified from the Scriptures. Here upon earth the believers have their purgatory through poverty, suffering, sickness, disappointments, persecution, need, grief, enticements, and all kinds of calamity. During life was the time to prepare for death. With this view so clearly stated it is rather strange that the citation of the same was retained in the Creed as taught in the Catechism.

Proper Counsel at the Funerals in the Early Days

The Last Will and Testament which
a Christian should Execute

"Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live." II Kings 20:1. In this connection there are two houses—the outer and the inner. The outer includes the body, material things and temporal affairs. The inner embraces conscience, the state of the soul, and the things of the spirit.

The Outer House

That a man desires to live is no sin. It is natural; but a man must not be-

come negligent in living for time and eternity. If our material affairs are properly transacted our house is always in good shape. Life is temporal; death is certain. The proper way to prepare for death is to live right. Train the children in the way they shall go from youth up and make proper provisions for them. A noble Christian life leaves a good influence. When a man does his part well, he can rest assured that God will aid in time of death. In the evening man goes to bed for rest. In the evening of life he finds rest in the bosom of mother earth. In the morning there is dawn and awakening. In the dawn of the last day there is resurrection.

The Will of a Christian Father

My task is done. My house is in order. Christ saved me. To Him I bequeath my sins. Receive them, Lamb of God. Thou art the only one who can relieve us of them and receive my heart. To the loving angels who protected and upheld me I give my tears. To Satan, all my good deeds which were not done out of a good heart. Earth, you are my mother, you sustained me and will unfold my body. To my wife I will leave God as a better husband. To my children, a better and a Heavenly Father. As you were taught to respect me, so fear and heed Him. To my friends, the Saviour, a Friend who will not forsake, nor leave you. To you poor, I leave with you a gracious God, and the Prayer of Faith—Our Father. More than this I have naught to give. And now once again I commend my spirit into the Hands of God, and depart in peace. Amen.

Comfort to Those Who Are Obligated to Bury Their Children

Scripture reference: Ecclesiasticus, referred to by the Fathers as Sirach 7:34: "Be not Wanting to them that weep; And mourn with them that mourn."

As little as a man can refrain from loving children, wife, friends, just as little can he refrain from weeping. As the godly wept at the departure of their children, as Jacob for Joseph; Abraham for his wife Sarah as it is written: "And Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her." And David's lamenta-

tions at the death of Saul and Jonathan; so it is natural for man to weep for his beloved ones.

David wept for his child while it was sick, but when it died he refrained from weeping. In the days of grace weeping should be checked. The proper advice is to take good care of the children during life, train them and enjoy life together with them remembering that we do not wish our children to plead for things contrary to our will and instruction. In like manner we should not rebel against the will of God. We know how Jesus received the children and said: "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." If we have done our part we can rest assured that God will take good care of His own. After all, we rear them for Him. If He who is all-wise knows that their going is for the best, then we should remember that if He calls them they are safe in the arms of Jesus. Under such circumstances we should turn unto the Lord for strength and comfort and say: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

Former Views About Baptism and the Lord's Supper

That the Schwenckfelders for a long period did not administer the tangible elements of the Sacraments, that is, that they did not baptize with water and partake of the Lord's Supper, is well known to all who are versed in the historic proceedings of the Church. But the reason why they did not is known only to those who have knowledge about the intricacies connected therewith. The late H. W. Kriebel, a well-read man, in his book, "The Schwenckfelders in Pennsylvania," makes the statement: "In Europe they did not celebrate the sacraments because the church and the state would not allow them." So the church and state did not allow them to worship in private homes but they did all the same." Again, "The lack of complete organization before 1782 was regarded a valid reason for not instituting the sacraments." They elected ministers, performed marriage ceremonies, catechized the children and taught them the meaning of the sacraments; what

prevented them from instituting them? Such statements are much more confusing than clarifying. After the constitution was adopted in 1782 and the church was organized, Christopher Kriebel preached a series of twenty sermons on Baptism and the Lord's Supper; but in spite of all that they did not institute the sacraments. There must have been some other reason.

In this connection it is better to search for the reason in the doctrines of our Reformer — Caspar Schwenckfeld. Among his writings we find such expressions as: "Der Stillstandt beim Nachtmal:" The Suspension of the Lord's Supper. And these are the stated reasons why this step was taken. Schwenckfeld says: "Because there is division among the officiating clergy and among the communicants when Paul distinctly said: 'For we being many are one bread, and one body.' Then there is no united faith, no common tie of love, no agreement in interpretation, no previous examination, no confession and no repentance, no growth in grace, no fruit of the Holy Spirit. When strife and contention rule it behooves us to heed Paul's warning: 'For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.'" These were some of the reasons for the suspension.

"Stillstandt beim Nachtmal" was very explicit to the Schwenckfelders but it was always confusing to non-Schwenckfelders. Those who were taught the literal interpretation of the sacraments, who believed that forgiveness and spiritual sustenance could only be attained

by partaking of the sacraments; that by these means, and by these means alone, the spirit of Christ and the body of the Lord could enter our soul and that salvation was confined to the literal observance of the same, these were worried at the terrible state of the non-communicants. To them "Stillstandt" meant perdition.

But to the mystic, who taught: "As the bread nurtures the body and as the wine quenches bodily thirst so the heavenly sustenance nurtures the soul: and the blood of Christ, the living water, redeems the soul and is the real spiritual drink, there was no real need for the sacraments." They did not miss anything through the "Stillstandt." For them there was no congregational observance of the Lord's Supper; but there was spiritual, individual communion with God. Did not Christ breathe His Spirit upon His disciples? Did not the Holy Spirit fall upon the household of Cornelius while Peter was preaching? Through real communion, worship, praise, prayer, meditation, spiritual baptism the spiritual sustenance is implanted into the soul. By these things men live. Thus they die daily and daily Christ is formed anew in them and it is no longer they that live but Christ liveth in them. These were the messages which Christopher Kriebel stressed in his sermons. Spiritual baptism, spiritual sustenance, spiritual growth, spiritual grace and communion with Christ, resulting in a spiritual unfolding and Christian activities, proclaiming the Lord's life and death until He comes; these were sufficient for him. For by these things souls are made whole.

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KRIEBEL, CHRISTOPHER, Jugendlicher Handel so aus 145 Bedenken bestehet, wobey die Apostel-Geschichte fragweise von versz zu versz durch gegangen ist und von Zeit zu Zeit mit der Jugend ist abgehandelt worden Bd. IV 1797.

KRIEBEL, CHRISTOPHER, Ein Schön Christliches Geistreiches Gebett-Buch bestehende in zwanzig Classen oder Theilen ausz dreÿen geistreichen gebett-büchern zusammen getragen. Das erste Deutsch Passional unsers Herren Jesu Christi. Das ander Psalter Gebettsweise gestellet. Sampt andern angehenkten Gebetten. Dise beide sind von dem seeligen Caspar Schwenckfelde gestellt und heraus gegeben. Das dritte Gebette über alle Evangelion so an den Sonntagen und Feyer-Tagen durchs gantze Jahr gelesen werden. Aufgesetzt und geschriben von einem Gottsgelehrten geistreichen Manne auch . . . Michael Hillers, Georg

Frells und anderer fromer Christen, Und abermahl abgeschrieben von mir Chr. Kr. 1750.

KRIEBEL, CHRISTOPHER, Sermons and sermon outlines, Memorial Day Sermons, etc.

KRIEBEL, CHRISTOPHER, Schrifften Sammlung Nehmlich so unsere Freunde in Schlesien herein an uns und wir wiederum an sie hinaus geschrieben haben, welche Theils zu gewisse Privat Personen, Theils auch sammtlich an das gantze Volk geschrieben sind . . . Diese Briefe u. Schrifften habe ich gesammelt u. ins reine abgeschrieben von 1765 bisz 1785 u. 1792. Christoph Kriebel.

KRIEBEL, CHRISTOPHER, Hymns No. 492, 714, 715, 716, 742, 745, 746, 747, in Hymn-Book of 1762.

GERHARD, SELINA S., Christopher Kriebel's Letter Book (The Schwenckfeldian, Vol. 4, 21-24, 1907).

KRIEBEL, VERNON K., A Biographical Sketch of Christopher Kriebel (The Schwenckfeldian, Vol. 4, 109-112, 1907).

SEIPT, ALLEN ANDERS, Christopher Kriebel, the Schwenckfelder Catechist (The Schwenckfeldian, Vol. 5, 56-58, 1908).



CHRISTOPHER SCHULTZ* (1718-1789)

His Ministry and His Sermons

By SELINA GERHARD SCHULTZ

The fellow-believers and followers of Caspar Schwenckfeld in Silesia, as well as elsewhere in the Old World, remained an unorganized, unchurched band of Christians even to the dying day of the last surviving member in that country in 1826. It was not until 1782, almost fifty years after the band of Schwenckfelder immigrants had set foot on the free soil of Pennsylvania, that church organization was undertaken by them.

Throughout the centuries many criticisms were offered and persecutions carried out against this religious movement. Still it survived all storms. The deferment of organization was not without some valid reasons.

1. Schwenckfeld had not intended to found a church or denomination which should accept and promulgate his religious views. The purpose of his efforts had been to help others to a more correct interpretation of Scripture and to direct men away from the external to the spiritual, to Christ the Royal Road, leading to the kingdom of the Spirit.

2. Any organization of his followers in the Old World, either during his lifetime, or afterwards, would have brought upon itself even more heavy persecutions than they already endured. Moreover, they would not have been permitted to organize as a church.

3. The century-long unorganized condition of their religious life, without churches in which to worship publicly, eventually became an accepted and ineradicable custom, almost a religious tenet. This attitude and custom, of necessity, continued firmly during the first years of their life in Pennsylvania.

* The first issue of SCHWENCKFELDIANA, September, 1940, was a memorial issue, commemorating the 150th anniversary of the passing of Christopher Schultz, scholar, teacher, preacher, writer and civic leader. In any consideration of early Schwenckfelder ministers his name may not be omitted from its rightful place among his contemporaries. Hence this special study of his ministry and his sermons is included in this issue.

4. The high standard of piety which their first leader in Pennsylvania, George Weiss, set for eligibility to membership in the Christian Apostolic Church as he conceived it, gave the individual Schwenckfelder a feeling of unworthiness to such membership.

5. Recognizing the universal misuse of the church, the Lord's Supper, and Baptism, the Schwenckfelders shrank from all these external appointments, until finally they came to feel that to engage in them was an abomination before God, which tended to draw the soul away from God, and to seek salvation in externalities where none was to be found.

6. The great hardships and privations of their pioneer life in Pennsylvania, and the widely scattered family groups made it extremely difficult, indeed well-nigh impossible, to establish and conduct regular, systematic private worship services and religious instructions for old and young everywhere, and to build up a deep spiritual life among them. This is what made life bitter for George Weiss and no doubt contributed greatly to his early death.

Leader of a New Order

A gradual evolution, in their attitude toward an organized church and its appointments, had to take place before they could undertake a new order of religious life. In this process of gradual change of thought and attitude, Christopher Schultz, the successor to George Weiss and Balthasar Hoffmann, gently and wisely led the way. Had he not been a part of the whole evolving story? Had he not experienced the old order? Now he envisioned the new. The heroic fathers and mothers who had brought their children to this country for religious freedom were minded to enjoy that freedom to the fullest extent, namely, to continue their religious customs without infringement or change. One by one these fathers and mothers had passed away. The two staunch leaders, George

Weiss and Balthasar Hoffmann, had tried most courageously to keep alive and build up the spiritual life of these immigrant parents under most discouraging conditions caused by the struggle for daily bread, raiment and shelter. They had been the teachers of the young Christopher Schultz who recognized their ideals and efforts as true and right. He saw the ruinous condition of the worship services among the group, and took to heart their spiritual needs. Their house worship-services were good, but not adequate. But the evolution of a new order was on the way.

The Initial Step

The initial step in it was taken in 1762 when the house-fathers assembled in conference and appointed Christopher Schultz to minister to them without a church organization, or building, or fixed membership and other establishments such as church institutions had. His catechism was accepted and appointed to be printed for use. From that time onward for a period of twenty years, Christopher Schultz carried the chief burden of ministering to his people, instructing the young, conducting funeral services in both Upper and Lower Districts—his first one, in March, 1764, was for an infant—and delivering his first Memorial Day sermon also in that year and thereafter on each recurring September 24th until his death, with the exception of 1787, when he was in poor health. In these duties he succeeded George Weiss and Balthasar Hoffmann.

Constructs a Systematic Theology

In 1775, sensing the need of a systematic theology for his work among his people, such as organized churches customarily had, he and several others entered upon a study of John Jacob Rambach's "Dogmatic Theology," in the light of their own Schwenckfeldian doctrine. This study continued periodically for eight years, Christopher Schultz being the leader and the writer of the conclusions. The result was a book of 600 pages, entitled: "Compendium, das ist kurze Zusammenfassung und Inbegriff derer Christlichen Glaubens Lehren." It was ready in 1783 to make its contribu-

tion under the new organization but remained in manuscript until 1836.

Formal Appointment to Ministry

By the slow but steady process of his patient, conscientious and instructive ministry for twenty years, the new period in the life of the Schwenckfelder religious body evolved. His was the leading spirit, although others, Christopher Kriebel in particular, who was of one mind with Christopher Schultz, greatly aided in the process. In 1782, after the constitution which Christopher Schultz had written was accepted, he was appointed formally as a minister of the Schwenckfelder Church. By request, he and Christopher Kriebel preached sermons on the Sacraments semi-annually. This question was a difficult one. It, too, needed to be solved very gradually. Only by patient instruction and deliberation could both ministers and laity come to an ultimate change of attitude regarding this question.

Hardships of the Ministry

His flock was widely scattered. Traveling on horseback or on foot over rough roads, or on by-paths, through woods and streams called for great self-sacrifice and devotion to the cause. It happened sometimes during his ministry that after returning home from conducting a funeral service in the Lower District, he had to make another trip immediately to the same district to officiate at a similar event. Naturally, members of his flock showed the weaknesses, failings and faults common to humankind which called for great charity and wisdom on the part of their minister. Perhaps, because of lack of comprehension, youth had become indifferent to the doctrine of Schwenckfeld for which their parents had made such great sacrifice. Christopher Schultz made an especial appeal to youth to attend instruction and become members of the newly organized body.

Ministry to Silesian Friends

While thus engaged in the interests and spiritual welfare of the Schwenckfelder group in this country, he and his cousin, Christopher Kriebel, of the Lower District, performed by correspondence a

no less necessary ministry to the pathetic little band of Schwenckfelders who for some reason or other had remained behind in Silesia when the main body fled. By intimidations, by death, and by the reaction of religious freedom granted in 1742, their numbers had been reduced to approximately fifty individuals, the majority of whom were now well advanced in years and living in great poverty. The absolute sincerity, humility, and constant quality of Christopher Schultz's ministry is apparent in the following excerpts from his letters to the Silesian Schwenckfelders, written in 1769, 1771, and 1773:

1. In answer to words of encouragement and admonition written to him by Carl Ehrenfried Heintze, of Probsthayn, Silesia, regarding his acceptance of the calling and name of minister, he says, March 6, 1769: "Concerning the office of leader, or deacon, I will give you my conception quite frankly. You direct me to the right source according to which I dare not stand still nor excuse myself about all those matters which you mentioned. My heart prayed long years ago and in these times again, and most sincerely desired nothing other than that, if the Lord wanted to use me, that I might be resigned to answer with Samuel: Lord, here am I. And I have done so at times when the Lord gave occasion, and as duty bound as I feel in this, so I also regard it my duty not to run ahead of His winking. You cannot know or imagine how we have wearied and intimidated each other in this land with congregational arrangements . . . It seems to me most advisable in this dissolution of Israel and spiritual bondage, that we do the best we can, and if, in the matter of arrangement of public worship, one can in sincere humility and Christian unity stand together on the lowest step, it may be best to do everything willingly for the honor of God and in service to one's neighbor, in the way of advancing the gospel and the knowledge of Christ, and to do everything diligently and faithfully under any human, official name . . . and if we serve Him faithfully and if the Lord wishes it otherwise, he may say: 'Go thou there,' etc. . . . This is the way it appears to me in my conscience with respect to

this matter. As far as the name is concerned I would like to avoid it, but would not like to avoid that which the Lord wants me to do. May He make me more efficient and by grace accomplish His work in and by me. In the meantime, as the meetings move about and each house-father has his duty, there is this benefit that each one is spurred on to examine, to arouse, and to stimulate himself. And they themselves recognize this, too.

"Concerning the Lord's Supper there is here at times a real Christian longing noticeable, but in these times great circumspection is called for. I will not oppose it if pious children of God, a small company, gather together, are impelled by grace, and desire to observe the Supper, because I do not want to criticise but to be worthy of their company. . . . But desirous souls cannot follow their spiritual appetites in this matter without taking into consideration their weak fellow-members, and to shield them, and if the time be not ripe for its observance consider what disquieting would result to the weak; whether one should include this one or that one, what sighs would arise among those little ones who must not be offended, and who are known only to the Father. When I consider all this I cannot see that we should undertake this at present . . . True, we have here liberty enough to do as we wish. But liberty brings less adaptability to spiritual fitness than does oppression and persecution, as you have undoubtedly learned."

2. March 11, 1771: "It behooves us all to call to mind frequently and remember gratefully the extraordinary circumstances of the divine providence over us, namely, the benefit of the divine enlightenment through our Savior, which was imparted to our forefathers so bountifully, in order that we may be impelled often and moved to diligence and earnestness in study and enjoyment, yea, to the spreading out of the same, which also belongs to gratitude, for we may well say that to us and ours in previous times, the prophecy of Isaiah pertained in Chapter 60:1.2, where we read: 'Arise, shine; for thy light is come and the glory of Jehovah is risen upon thee. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and

gross darkness the peoples; but Jehovah will arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.' Such a glory of Jesus Christ arose in the time of Schwenckfeld and his fellow-believers, and they were enlightened in heart, mind, and understanding and in all that was good; whereas with many it was dark, and still is. In such light they grew and gave the Lord Christ all divine honor in his glory, in like manner also in every beginning, grace, power, and increase of faith, and inward newness, in the office of justification and salvation of the poor sinner. This, however, grieved the prince of darkness and brought the world against them. Yet the Lord preserved in us the testimony of the light and gave into our hearts a conviction of it. We are much too insignificant for all His benefits, but let us at least be concerned and intent with all care and diligence, that such a treasure be not extinguished in our hands, but be upheld. Otherwise we may be punished with the scorners You are small in number, as we see by the list of names of those who are still remaining of them who hold to our confession, and of those (as we notice) seven have passed away in a short time. O you who remain! Whatever you do, as much as you are able, do not let the light go out entirely. Who can tell of what service you may be to the Lord in your smallness even in your death with such zealousness, and that after your death it may grow in many souls. Be it as it may, nothing is lost in the ministry of the Lord." (The following verses are included in his letter, probably composed by him:)

Ach dein Lebens Geist durchdringe,
Gnade, Krafft und Seegen bringe,
Deinen Glidern allzumal,
Wo sie hier Zerstreuet wohnen,
Unter allen Nationen,
Die du kennest überall,
O Herr Jesu, Gottes Sohn!
Schau doch einst von deinem Thron,
Schaue die Zerstreung an,
Die kein Mensch nicht bessern kan.
Sammle, Grosser Menschenhirt!
Alles was sich hat verirrt;
Las in deinem Gnaden-Schein
Alles gantz vereinigt seyn
Gisz den Balsam deiner Krafft,
Der dem Herten Leben schafft,
Tief in unser Hertz hinein,
Strahl in uns den Gnaden Freuden-
Schein. Amen.

3. February 22, 1773: "What troubles us most concerning you, and after receipt of the latest report, puts us still further into a dilemma are the miserable, distressing food conditions in which we have to think of you, in love so closely related to us. We would not only sincerely wish you relief but also provide it, if only it could be done more practically, as we are going to do again herewith.

"But how shall we comfort you with words, which we also owe to you? Naturally we can tell you nothing you do not already know, but when the test or need is at hand, and when not only one's skin but also one's stomach is in danger, we poor mortals are so miserable that we are apt to forget the very things which we should remember. Therefore, we cannot help but to beg of you and admonish you, that in the face of such pressing poverty and debt you remember the divine provision for all creatures, and particularly for those who hope in His kindness, and to remind you of the comforting promises of God in the Psalms and elsewhere. Try to hold fast to this with the heart, that His word of promise is still truth today. . . . The spirit of the Lord says to you, Ps. 55:23: 'Cast thy burden on the Lord, he will care for thee.' And I Peter 5:7: 'Casting all your anxiety upon him, because he careth for you.' This is certain, none ever perished, or was deceived in His confidence who so trusted Him. Man cannot so easily rid himself of anxiety. Hence God is so good and does not lay it to their charge that they complain to Him. Therefore, Paul commands that we should not let anxiety get the better of us, and adds the advice, Phil. 4:6: 'But in all things by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.' Whoever among you will go to the good God with his trouble, him He will make to realize that he will not be deceived in His confidence. But that we do not drift into too much detail, we will commend in further encouragement in trust to God, Erasmus Weichenhan's sermon on the 15th Sunday after Trinity, and in the hymn: 'Barmhertziger und milder Gott,' p. 417, to lift up your faith in this matter.

"But these are all things which con-

cern the corruptible body whose care, according to the Lord's command, we shall put second to the seeking of the kingdom of God. Therefore, you dear ones, let us be mindful, under physical privation and need of physical bread for bodily sustenance, of the necessity of our souls and how they must have bread if they are not to perish in eternal hunger. And here we again know sufficiently well that He, to whom we owe thanks for the gifts of physical bread, has also in His divine providence and gracious care prepared the bread for our souls and preserved it in the incorruptible heavenly state, and will gladly give it and divide it generously to every desirous soul, as generously as He ever gave the physical bread in the cheapest times. But we are to seek it trustingly from Him and seek it only from Him with faith's desire, where alone it is to be found, saying: 'O our Father (since Thou knowest what poor, needy children we are, who without Thy gift would have to die), give us this day our daily bread. We must receive daily a certain portion of such gifts from Thy hand, otherwise we cannot live, hence we call it our bread because it is so well adapted to the nature of our souls, and we must have it daily. Thou art our Father and provider, so give it to us, Thy hungry children.' If we seek it on this wise from our heavenly Father, or from His administrator, Jesus Christ, He will give it to us and we will with such a gift become partakers of the greatest promises."

His Sermons

The book of sermons, or a postil, which he had been requested to write, had to remain unaccomplished because of many other duties and the infirmities of advanced age. However, he wrote and preserved many sermon outlines, as well as a volume of Summaries of Memorial Day Sermons, 1743-1782, 4°, 1,054 pages, containing the following preface, dated March 19, 1782:

"Almost half a century has passed since the generous and gracious God liberated us, who belong to the little group known as Schwenckfelders, then living (as well as those who have now passed away), from the hand of the bitter persecutor, and has so marvelously and

beneficently brought us into this land to the enjoyment of much-desired religious liberty. To this day we are still enjoying and participating in this great blessing and its beneficent fruits. In order, however, that this may not be forgotten, it was considered good and desirable, soon after our arrival here, to hold a Thanksgiving celebration in order that we might mutually call to mind this divine blessing and the duties involving upon us, and to encourage each other therein. But, in order that this might be done in a suitable manner, someone was chosen and besought by common agreement, annually, since the death of the leader George Weiss (who first suggested this praiseworthy plan, and carried it out fervently until 1739), to present a profitable address to the congregation on this day. This was done from 1740 to 1763 by the late Balthasar Hoffmann who preserved written summaries of all his yearly sermons. Since then I was requested annually to do this, and also to keep a written record of my sermons. This reasonable request I wanted to grant, and that is what is to be found in the following pages. The subject matter of the various sermons is unrelated. Nor was I intent on that, but rather I desired of God, and prayed, that He guide my thoughts upon whatever He, the searcher of hearts, regarded at the time as a most valuable and necessary aid to the peoples' remembrance, etc."

His Memorial Day Sermon, 1782

Christopher Schultz preached his first Memorial Day sermon in 1763. Up to that time, Balthasar Hoffmann, from 1740, the year of the death of George Weiss, until 1762, conducted the services apparently alone on this annual Thanksgiving Day of the Schwenckfelders. Important theological themes were presented by the preachers in their sermons. They always stressed the high significance of the occasion, comparing premigration conditions with the peace, the liberty and the temporal and spiritual blessings of their life in the New World, and reminding their hearers of the many reasons for thankfulness. They were requested to preserve summaries of these sermons.

A fine specimen of these annual dissertations—the first one in a volume of Memorial Day Sermons of 1782-1799—is that delivered September 24, 1782, in the forenoon, by Christopher Schultz. This was the year of church organization. He was then 64 years of age, and it was his nineteenth Memorial Day sermon. The place of meeting is not recorded.

The Theme

The theme of this sermon was: The Thoughts of the Human Heart. His introductory remarks were devoted to memories which this festive day brings: "The name of the Lord our ruling King, Jesus Christ, be praised and honored for His great kindness shown in permitting such a large number of us, dear friends, after the passing of another year since last Memorial Day, to meet and see each other here. Let all honor be given to Him by all of us for His most gracious guidance of us His weak creatures and poor, miserable sinners, and for again granting us this day on which we all together may call to mind His manifold mercies and patience, to His praise. May the good, kind Lord graciously come now and abide with us, be in our midst to support and lead us in whatever is pleasing to His will. For this let us beseech Him and reverently call upon Him by singing the words of the well-known hymn:

Herr Jesu Christ! Dich zu uns wend,
Dein'n heil'gen Geist du zu uns send!
Mit Hilf und Gnaden uns regier,
Und uns den Weg zur Wahrheit führ!

Then continuing his sermon: "Gedächtniss-Tag directs us to draw our minds away from all distractions that may hinder us from occupying our thoughts with such things as are pleasing to God and worthy of our remembrance. This day was appointed long ago to be observed in remembering. Thus our minds have a task in examining and recollecting those events and circumstances which happened to us in former times, not concerning vain, sinful or perishable things, but such as pertain to our lasting eternal well-being and the honor of God.

"This day is a memorial day of the merciful guidance of God which He has spent on us. Therefore let us by way of

introduction consider to what kind of recollections this festive day leads us, But at this point I am reminded first of all of our incapacity and unfitness to all good works, and that our Savior said: 'Without me ye can do nothing.' Of ourselves we are unable even to think anything good. All fitness, or ability, comes from God. Therefore, arise and bow with me before the throne of Grace, Jesus Christ, that He may be present with us to strengthen us with His power and to lead us with His light into all truth."

The Prayer

"O Thou our God and King, Lord Jesus Christ, praise, honor and thanks be Thine from us Thy poor creatures, for Thy merciful care and providence, whereby we have been brought to this day and have been enabled to gather together here under Thy protection, in health and heartiness. O gracious Lord! Do Thou conduct us further by Thy grace, that we may spend these hours according to Thy pleasure, reverently, and with hearts and minds consecrated and clinging to Thee. Lord, we feel and confess our utter inability to spend this day as we should, to Thy praise and honor, for we, left to ourselves, as spiritually dead, can no more progress in that which is good than can he who is physically dead. This was recognized by Thee in the words: 'Without me ye can do nothing.' Yes, without Thee we have no spiritual life, for Thou alone art the life and givest life. How then shall we without Thee, O Thou fountain of Life, have any true life, or show any results or fruits of life? Since Thou, O good shepherd and bishop of our souls, knowest so well our needs, and hast shown Thyself merciful and sympathetic, and still art, in Thy glory, the unchangeable fountain, O look down in grace upon us in this hour, upon us who are as the parched earth in Thy sight, and water us with the living dew and rain of Thy grace. . . . O Thou our throne of grace and faithful high-priest, what shall befall us if Thou dost not intercede for us? . . . O grant us the precious gift of a living faith and sincere trust in Thee our faithful mediator and fix the eyes of our hearts, in every sermon, upon

Thee alone, in order that we may be planted in Thee, O living vine, and may abide in Thee, as Thou hast promised us, and thus become partakers of the outflow of Thy life, and bring to Thee and the Father agreeable fruits, to the praise of Thy glory, now and evermore. Amen."

Continuing the sermon: "On this day we should reverently recall the gracious leading of God, especially such leading as the dear God has shown us as a small group, in general, and particularly call to mind: 1. That God bestowed upon our forefathers, above many thousand others, the pure testimony of divine truth and revelation (referring to Schwenckfeld's doctrine), and bountifully entrusted the same to us as a treasure above all earthly treasures. Imagine in what condition we would be, had we been born and reared in the darkness of heathenism or Mohammedanism (which nations are more numerous than the so-called Christians), or under the anti-Christian, error-stricken, so-called Christian nations. Be it far from us to think that we are of superior worth in comparison with such nations, and that for that reason God showed us such beneficence although we are not in the least of better stuff than they. The fact remains that it is a gracious dispensation and leading of God, which is well worth remembering and being grateful for to God, praising Him and also reminding ourselves of our duty, and determining to fulfill the same with the help of God. 2. When in Silesia the testimony of divine revelation began to decline greatly because of neglect and indifference, God brought about a great sifting of those who had this testimony in hand. But He preserved our parents mercifully so that in the great darkness and weakness they would not and could not swerve from it. When it could not be otherwise, they rather deserted property and fortune, sustenance and fatherland, and went into exile in order that they might not rob us, their children, of this great treasure. Had they not done this, all of you gathered before me here, would be covered by, and sunken in, papal darkness and superstition. God did it; He strengthened our parents marvelously when many of their relatives and friends deserted right and left,

and preferred worldly comfort to the precious confession of faith. In spite of all this our parents maintained faith and a good conscience toward God, which we, thank God, enjoy to this day.

"When the merciful God found such faithfulness in our parents, He not only spared us regardless of our great sin, but marvelously stretched out His powerful hand over us for the best (as one now can plainly see) to fulfill in us the promise of His Son, which He gave to those who for His sake forsook something. He drew us together in exile, into a small group, and then lifted us up and on His eagle-wings, carried us over the great sea, and set us down and maintained us here in another part of the world, in undisturbed liberty and good, abundant sustenance. Furthermore, He gave grace that in this land we were led and summoned anew in the matter of the precious confession of faith, whoever desired to hear and observe it.

In particular, we should remember today and call forth out of the recesses of memory, each one for himself and on his own account, what of divine revelation from youth onward we have experienced inwardly concerning the correctness of this testimony, the fundamental points of which can be grasped under two principal heads, namely, 1. The doctrine of the corruptness of human nature, and 2. The doctrine of the only physician, Jesus Christ. I mean it thus: Whether in listening to, or grasping, these doctrines, one has not at times felt an inner conviction that it was fundamental truth. I cannot doubt in the least that such was the case with those who gave it an attentive ear, for God is so true that He confirms His outward testimony from within in the conscience, that it is the truth. Is one thus convinced of the correctness of it, then one is in duty bound to abide by this testimony, because it is correct. Hence, we need to examine ourselves and call to mind how we have up to the present, used our convictions, and how we have followed God's purpose toward ourselves and our fellowmen, which is emancipation from death and redemption in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Whether we have been diligent to inquire further and further into this revealed testimony and will of God, or whether we have not

frequently disregarded it and have filled our minds with something else. Whether God does not distribute His talents in order that we may make use of them for ourselves as well as for others. How is it with regard to these things? What does each one of us find on his conscience? How faithful have we been? Examination is necessary today, for the time is rapidly moving up when God will call us to account. If conscience gives one a good testimony, one should thank God and rejoice. But if the opposite is the case, as, sad to say, it appears to be with the majority, we should fall down humbly before God, like a servant, and beg forgiveness while it is called today, and He will graciously forgive all who beseech Him with sincere repentance.

A pure testimony and confession about God and the way of salvation through Christ in faith, is certainly a valuable and precious talent to whomsoever God entrusts it. That God showed us such grace, no one can deny who examines into it sufficiently and gives room to the convictions mentioned. When I look at the history of our group, I am still further confirmed in this opinion by the fact that so large a number of those who deserted this confession, had inherited it from their parents and had been born and reared in it. Not a single one of all those who deserted, said or testified that he did so because his conscience compelled him to accept another doctrine, or because he found that this doctrine was in any respect erroneous. I allege that I have not found a single one who did so. In every case, love of the world and sin was the impelling motive for changing sides (as it has been termed by others), or for going back with Lot's wife.

Therefore, we who today because of the preservation by, and with, the testimony of pure, revealed doctrine, celebrate Memorial Day, should not rush along unconcerned, and flutter hither and yon in our thoughts. We have here worthy matters before us which we should remember and busy our minds with in the presence of God. Remembering is an exercising of our thoughts; with the thoughts of the heart the matter must be weighed and considered. Hence, we must pay attention to our thoughts that we fix them closely thereon.

"God will have shown us His Will and truth in vain, if we do not draw our thoughts away from foolish, sinful ways and turn them diligently upon this matter, and show that God's offer is important to us. We will never attain spiritual perception and eternal life, if we do not fix our thoughts thereon. The poet admonishes rightly when he says: 'Turn heart, mind and thought to the Lord Jesus Christ.' What does it benefit if ever so fine teachings are presented and one does not direct one's thoughts closely and diligently upon them? For this reason the matter of the thoughts appeared so important that I decided to speak of it today. But let us first sing together to the praise of God, the hymn: 'Allein Gott in der Höh sey Ehr.'

"We have previously on Memorial Days always considered important and valuable fundamental truths, as well as throughout the year in the general meetings. But it depends on how reverently and attentively such teachings are received if a benefit is to be derived therefrom. Such attention and reverence depend on whether our thoughts are directed in the proper course. Therefore, let us today take under consideration the thoughts of the human heart.

"You beloved, old and young, this is a matter in which we are constantly engaged, and in this hour, for as long as one is not asleep one cannot be without thoughts. And as we shall hear, it depends unspeakably much on what the nature of our thoughts is. So, collect your thoughts and call them in from other rambling meditations and consider with me the business of our thoughts, and see and experience for yourselves in how far I am right in that which I am about to present to you. I hope that I shall by the help of God present nothing but what experience itself, in each one, can judge and perceive that there is foundation for it. If we take it to heart, we can derive great benefit therefrom. In order that we may grasp it the better, let us divide the theme into three parts for consideration:

"I. The nature of thoughts.

"II. The quality of thoughts in the unconverted state of man.

"III. The quality of thoughts in the converted state of man."

His development of this theme covers 22 quarto pages of closely written German script. In the conclusion he says: "Good thoughts, particularly about the word of the Lord . . . are a real communion with God, out of which naught but pure blessing can come. They strengthen and arm the soul against evil attacks so that these cannot find a foothold; they make wise, and are the mother of all good works just as bad thoughts are the parents of all actual sin. Good thoughts place the soul into the enjoyment of divine peace, and into rest, and thereby one sanctifies and celebrates the Lord's Sabbath . . . The faithful Creator and merciful heavenly Father grant that in future we pay more attention to our thoughts and those of our children, that they may be drawn away from evil and be consecrated to the Lord, and that we may present ourselves as vessels to His honor, in whom truth, righteousness and holiness dwell."

At the Memorial Day services of 1787, at the home of Peter Gerhard in Goshenhoppen, Christopher Schultz gave a brief and pathetic farewell address to the little group of his fellow-believers in the Schwenckfelder faith. His strength had failed both physically and mentally and he felt compelled to take his place among the hearers, much to his regret. He called to mind his dissertation on the previous Memorial Day, 1786, on the theme: The love of God to us, and our love to God. He had cheerfully and very

conscientiously served his people and had fulfilled every wish and request of theirs gladly for many years. He now prayed that God give strength, light and courage to others to continue expounding Christian doctrine henceforth, and that it be received and practiced dutifully by their hearers. His cousin, Christopher Kriebel, who esteemed him very highly, having charge of the forenoon services on that day, gave a response to this farewell address:

"This address is to be regarded as a real fatherly reminder to his people. If only we might accept it in childlike trust. We are grieved on the one hand that he cannot as formerly serve us with sermons according to his God-given gift. He served us not only on Memorial Days, but also on Sundays and holidays, and with funeral sermons. We are now robbed of these through his mental weakness. On the other hand we rejoice because he wishes for us the good from above, from God, now and henceforth, which we as children should regard as a real fatherly admonition, and unite with him before God as a Christian family, then the Lord will bless and be with us."

His sermons and sermon outlines, of which a great number have been preserved, bear evidence of the fact that he spent his life in much earnest, conscientious study, in deep meditation on the things of God and His kingdom, and in great and good thoughts.

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CHRISTOPHER HOFFMANN (1727-1804)

Minister, Copyist, Bookbinder

By ELMER S. GERHARD

Christopher Hoffmann was the only son of the prominent Schwenckfelder scholar, diplomat, and minister, Balthasar Hoffmann. He was born in Saxony,¹ December 3, 1727, and was one of four grandsons of the elder Christopher Hoffmann for whom he was named. He never saw the Silesia of his forefathers; nor did he know aught of the agonizing experiences of his mother and two sisters and the rest of the Schwenckfelder group during the years of persecution, when both father and grandfather were at the Imperial Court of Vienna pleading for tolerance.

He was only a boy of seven years when his parents started on the tedious voyage across the Atlantic in 1734. Nothing further is known of his early life; his later years, however, give evidence that he imbibed a thorough comprehension of what had taken place in Silesia and in Saxony before the flight to America and of the fundamental reasons for those events. He died, January 29, 1804, at the age of seventy-seven years.²

Training

His lot as a youth was the common lot of all the youth among his people as pioneers in Pennsylvania. Life was not a bed of roses; nor was it, on the other hand, so burdened with care that no time was left for doing a little straight thinking, or for a little meditation and reflection on the momentous events that had passed and the equally momentous problems which the pioneer in the American wilderness had to face in his efforts to make a living. Civilization, it has been said, is only an increase in the multiplicity of our wants. Fortunately the wants

of these people were relatively few and easily satisfied. No precious moments were wasted in idleness and frivolity. Thrift and frugality were practiced in time, money, and effort and in what not. Only what was noble, holy and of high degree was considered of notice and consideration.

The father was a great teacher and a man of wisdom passing strange, and the son a diligent pupil who brought joy to the father's heart. He appreciated the father's great work, and later on in life he honored him by writing an account of his life and work. Where could he find a better, a more sympathetic, teacher either in the study of languages or of the Bible and in Christian doctrine and Christian living. His father was his inspiration, and none of the efforts of the former, exerted in the training of the son for a noble and useful life, were in vain. When the son was married it was the father who performed the ceremony.³

A Perfect Penman

Both father and son did such exquisite work with the quill pen that one is really puzzled at times to know on which one's work to bestow the greater praise. As a child, Christopher Hoffmann undoubtedly had much practice in the use of the quill pen, or perhaps he just had a natural aptitude for neat work of this sort. Between 1758 and 1760, he copied the George Weiss Hymn-Book of 1,559 hymns! This was a laborious task; these were not short hymns of two, three or four stanzas, but hymns that ran into eight or even ten stanzas. The execution of the work as practiced and evidenced in the copying reminds one of the work done by the monks in the monasteries well-nigh a thousand years ago.⁴ "This hymn-book of the Schwenckfeld-

¹ Whither his parents and other Schwenckfelders had fled from Silesia and lived for eight years under the tutelage of Count von Zinzendorf until their departure for America.

² Both he and his wife, Rosina (Dresher) Hoffmann, are buried in the Salford Schwenckfelder Cemetery. They left no descendants.

³ Married Rosina Dresher, May 17, 1753.

⁴ A specimen page of this hymn-book, copied by Christopher Hoffmann, is reproduced in Seipt, "Schwenckfelder Hymnology," 1909, page 104.

ers, which may be said to represent the art of the Middle Ages, extended into the 18th century and across the Atlantic, is the best specimen of their manuscripts known to those familiar with the subject. . . . On examining this manuscript, we cannot but feel the strongest admiration for the zeal and patience of the scribe, the neatness and excellence of his work, the strength and beauty of his binding, and the nice care with which the book has been preserved through one hundred and twenty-one years in all its original freshness and purity."⁵

Into his copied text he incorporated the textual revision, or corrections, of the hymns which had been made by George Weiss and his father (Balthasar Hoffmann); these corrections he indicated on the margin of his copy; they were to a large extent made use of in editing the printed hymn-book of the Schwenckfelders—"Neu-Eingerichtetes Gesang-Buch," this was their first hymn-book printed in America.⁶ Many copies of the Saur edition contain a manuscript which is also the work of Christopher Hoffmann.

He also copied and thus preserved many exegeses of hymns made by his father, who had an aptitude for hymn-writing and for the exposition of hymns; in fact, he could do both to perfection. It was a common thing in days gone by as rather a part of the catechetical course to analyze a hymn—"ein Gedicht"—and to try to get at the thought and motive of the writer.

In 1777, he wrote an interesting and valuable sketch of his father's life and an account of his labors; and this, by the way, is the only coherent narrative we have of his father. Later in life he collected and copied his father's writings in a large volume, folio in size, 468 pages, and an index. This, too, is a work of art; it is embellished with many decorative initials and marginalia. It bears the title:

Erbauliche u Nützliche
Betrachtungen
Welche der treue und einfältige Zeuge
Gottes, Jesu Christi und seiner reinen
Wahrheit
Balthasar Hoffmann
in Pennsilvanien von Anno
1737 bis Anno 1768
geschrieben

Gesammelt und zusammen getragen
von
Christoph Hoffmann
1795

In the preface to this book he says he collected and copied these writings by his father (a) because he valued the doctrine of Caspar Schwenckfeld very highly, in fact not yet highly enough; (b) because he considered it extraordinary that God gave his father such insight and intelligence, also diligence, zeal, and interest to study Christian doctrine and to expound it by Scriptural witness. He says, furthermore, that much of what his father wrote was written by request. He hopes through his own study and meditations of these writings to attain to a better knowledge of Christ than he would have attained if they had been allowed to remain scattered.

Bookbinder

"Christopher Hoffmann is probably best remembered as the Schwenckfelder 'bookbinder.' Many manuscript volumes repose on the shelves of the Schwenckfelder Historical Library at Pennsburg, Pa., showing his amazing skill and workmanship. Large folios with board covers, covered with pig skin, decorated with fancy designs, oft-times with brass corners and brass knobs in the center of the covers, are a tribute to the amazing activity of this farmer, preacher, teacher, compiler, and bookbinder. How he ever found time to accomplish so much work with his crude tools is the query of the modern student. Large collections of sermons, letters, a folio volume of letters written by imprisoned Schwenckfelders in Silesia copied in 1746, were bound and preserved by him."⁷

It would be interesting to know how and where he learned the trade. It may be that he was just a natural-born "Künstler," an artificer, who had the ability, the knack, to do such work; or possibly his father taught him this art also as he did the executing of fine penmanship with the quill pen. The father was an expert weaver of the finest linen,

⁵ Samuel W. Pennypacker, November 6, 1881. *Vide*, Seipt, "Schwenckfelder Hymnology," page 89.

⁶ Christopher Saur, Germantown, 1762.

⁷ Brecht, Gen. Record, page 1,184.

but he was no less an expert in other lines. At all events, the young man was known as a bookbinder at the age of twenty-five, for on November 15, 1752, Abraham Wiegner and his wife Susanna, conveyed to Christopher Hoffmann, "bookbinder," 83 acres in the present Township of Lower Salford, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania.

Much of the Schwenckfelder literature at that time was in manuscript and unbound. Some of the manuscript volumes bound by him have upwards of a thousand pages. These furnished almost limitless employment for him. Bindings like these are exceedingly rare; they are exquisite masterpieces of book-binding, perfectly executed, in tooled leather over boards with brass mountings and clasps. Moreover, he bound several hundred copies of the first edition of the "Erläuterung, which was printed in Jauer, Silesia, 1771, and shipped to Philadelphia unbound.

Teacher

In 1764, when the Schwenckfelders initiated their school system, Christopher Hoffmann not only pledged 20 pounds to support the project, but also served as a trustee and inspector of the schools in Skippack for seven years. In 1782, when he was already fifty-five years old, he himself began to teach, and was looked upon as a very efficient teacher.

Catechist and Minister

Just when he began as catechetical instructor of the Schwenckfelder young people has never been discovered; apparently it is not a matter of record. In this as in all his work he was thorough, and kept a record of the work done by his pupils. Many of his sermon outlines are still extant, including his Memorial Day sermons. In the collection of Memorial Day sermons delivered during the period 1782-1799 are ten by Christopher Hoffmann. The first of these he delivered in 1784, at the afternoon session, September 24, at the home of Abraham Kriebel in Towamencin. His theme was "Remembrance of the Blessings of God." He referred briefly to the "particular blessing of God in that He extricated the revealed, pure testimony of His divine truth from spiritual bond-

age, together with our forefathers, carried it across the ocean and placed it here in liberty where it is being practiced and promulgated unhindered. This fact was recognized by the fathers as a special favor from God. And hence they instituted a Memorial Day." All the early ministers referred to Schwenckfeld's doctrine as "the pure, revealed testimony of divine truth." And on every recurring Memorial Day they stressed its great value and importance and the need of cherishing it. So this day was set aside as a day of remembrance and of thanksgiving for the emancipation of this doctrine and its adherents from the oppression and suppression which both suffered in the Old Country for centuries.

Christopher Hoffmann's sermons, like all those of his colleagues in the Schwenckfelder ministry, were scholarly, methodical presentations of Scriptural themes, or texts, and followed an outline. These plans and thoughts were original and unique; they showed that much time had been spent in study and preparation. The sermons which have been preserved are worthy of careful perusal; they are instructive, full of spiritual truth and are couched in the finest German language, like that of Schwenckfeld himself; there is nothing commonplace about them, nor are they mere repetitions of theological terms, or mere words. All this literature had a profound bearing on the culture and learning of the Schwenckfelders.

Social Traits

Christopher Hoffmann, like his father, was a modest and an unassuming man. Public office had no attraction for him. Tradition has it that at one time he was appealed to by messengers to serve in a certain public office for which he had been chosen; but he positively refused to accept the honor. After the messengers had left he said to his wife, "Oh, how good it is to be able to remain humble!"⁸

⁸ Brecht, Gen. Record, page 1,183.

These are virtually the same words his father used in the notable letter to his mother and family in Silesia while he was at the Court in Vienna. *Vide*, article on Balthasar Hoffmann in this issue where this letter is quoted.





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